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ANDREW STUART.

A NOVEL.

LANE, MINERVA-PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.



*Mrs. Hitchcock from her
Sister the Author*
ANDREW STUART,

OR THE
NORTHERN WANDERER.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

MARY ANN HANWAY,
AUTHOR OF ELLINOR, OR THE WORLD AS IT IS.

- “ 'Tis SATIRE gives the strongest light to sense,
“ To thought compression, vigour to the soul,
“ To language bounds, to fancy due controul,
“ To Truth the splendor of her awful face,
“ To learning dignity, to virtue grace,
“ To conscience stings beneath the cap or crown;
“ To Vice that terror she will feel and own.”

Pursuits of Literature.



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1800.

ANDREW STUART

OF THE

NORTHERN HANDBOOK

AND A MONTHLY



ANDREW STUART.



CHAP. I.

MR. CARTER having quieted his agitated nerves by a few hours' sleep, thus proceeded with his narrative:—

“A week elapsed before an answer arrived from my friend Edward; I opened it with avidity, never doubting, from his affectionate heart, that I should find the contents equal, if not more consolatory than those I had already received. From a brief abstract, you will judge of the disappointment I experienced to my high-raised expectations.

“ He commenced his letter by assurances of the grief he felt for my misfortunes, and his regret at being obliged to add to their weight by his communications : he then proceeded to inform me, that Lord Burford’s wound was in the right side, that the ball lodged in the back, from whence it had been extracted : the Faculty did not suppose any of the vital parts were hurt, therefore great hopes were entertained of his recovery ; though his Lordship’s partisans wished it to be believed that he remained in imminent danger, to enable them to speak of me with the more asperity. My duel with Lord Burford had made a great noise, and created much bustle in the world of fashion ; it was taken up as a common cause among his brother Nobles, who most acrimoniously arraigned the insolent presumption of an upstart plebeian, daring to insist on a Peer of the Realm’s meeting him upon *equal* terms ; that the chronicles of
the

the day teemed with abusive paragraphs against me, tending to blacken my character.

“ Harry Burford had published an account, drawn up with much art, of what he called my unprovoked attack upon his Lordship, sinking all the antecedent provocation, by which *manceuvre* I appeared as the aggressor. This memorial was signed by himself, and the hirelings who were present. It had in some degree poisoned the mind of the public against my cause, and occasioned me to be prejudged, which, should his brother die, would in all probability oblige me to become for ever an alien to my country.

“ He advised me, as an antidote to this perversion of facts, to publish in my own vindication the whole cause of quarrel between Lord Burford and myself; to enumerate all the calumnies I had endured from his false accusations at Oxford; the wrongs I had sustained in

being obliged to relinquish my profession, the insolent treatment and degrading blow I received from him at Edinburgh ; and to conclude by calling on the spirit of Englishmen to say if I was not exculpated for following this cowardly assassin, and compelling him to give me satisfaction.

“ He then proceeded to regret that he must add to his disagreeable intelligence, that which was of a nature to affect me still more poignantly—he was sorry to say that no persons were more enraged against me than his parents, urged on by the exaggerated account of the affray, given by his brother Thomas, who was the intimate friend of Lord Burford, and most ambitious of the honour of his alliance ; as a climax to my woes, Mr. Lurcher having seduced the affections of Florentina’s maid, through whose assistance we had hitherto corresponded, she had betrayed our confidence to her paramour, who had

had instantly flown to acquaint Sir Thomas and Lady Lurcher with the discovery he had made.

“ They would not permit him to offer a single word in my justification, with one voice denouncing me as a most wicked, abandoned, and depraved character—an artful, designing hypocrite, who was capable of the basest ingratitude to those friends, to whom his family and himself owed the means of existence; an inhospitable bosom traitor, who stole into the confidence of the father, to enrich himself by robbing him of the duty and affection of his daughter.

“ Finally, that Lady Lurcher and her son Thomas had worked upon the pride, passions, and prejudices of the Baronet, till he had been induced to give them his promise to break off all intercourse with my father, and to humble my sister by sending her back to Hartlebury, though their improper indulgence

had rendered her totally unfit to become a resident in the humble domains of her parents; and, lastly, to insist on Florentina's accepting the hand of Lord Burford, should he recover of his wounds—if not, to oblige her, on pain of their everlasting displeasure, to renounce all thoughts of me for ever.

“My kind Edward did not recount this heart-rending intelligence in the abrupt manner which the retrospection of the troubles that followed, compels me to do to you. By him it was told in the most conciliating, friendly, and consolatory manner; but he thought it necessary I should know the whole of these misfortunes Fate had in store for me, that I might be prepared for the worst, and guarded against the machinations of my enemies.

“He concluded by assuring me his opinion was unchanged—to *his* heart I was dear as ever; that he would exert himself to comfort my parents for the unjust

unjust persecution and desertion of his family. He entreated me to exert all my fortitude to bear these accumulated evils, with the heroism of a philosopher and the resignation of a Christian ; to believe that all would yet be well, and to never despair while I felt the conviction that I still retained the tender love of my Florentina, and the affectionate friendship and sincere esteem of her brother Edward.

“ The worthy Trentham, entering my apartment to inquire after news from England, found me writhing on the floor in strong convulsions, with the fatal letter fast clenched in my hand. Medical assistance was instantly procured ; I was put to bed. The varied troubles and agitations my mind had for some weeks past endured, rendered it feeble and powerless, unable to sustain this new and unexpected stroke of adverse Fate. On perusing Edward's epistle, the conviction of all the evils

that have since happened, flashed upon my weakened intellect: I saw all my hopes of happiness in this world annihilated, my family devoted to destruction, and I, who would have cheerfully died to save and serve them, though free from intentional guilt, was the cause of all this overwhelming ruin.

“It was too much for human endurance, and I became the victim of the united endeavours of my persecutors. A frenzy fever seized my brain—nothing was left unattempted for my restoration by the generous Trentham; he employed the best physicians in Paris, sat by my side whole days and nights, administered my medicines with all the assiduities of a friend, and the affectionate attentions of a beloved brother.

“The united efforts of skill and his unremitting care, aided by youth, and a constitution unvitiated by dissipation, enabled me to conquer the fever, and with it the violent paroxysms of frantic madness.

madness. But, alas! I sank into a moody melancholy, in which I used to sit whole days totally absorbed, while my lack lustre eyes glared on vacancy. I ate, I drank instinctively whatever was put before me;—I could not speak, and appeared to know no person. The boasted privilege of man, the varying faculties of the soul, the ethereal spark breathed into me by my God, was extinct.—I give you this description of my deplorable situation from the account of those who beheld in the helpless maniac I presented to their eyes, the wreck of what was once youth, health, and intellect.

“ In the state of mind and body I have delineated, without one idea of the passing scenes, unconscious that I existed at all, I remained twelve months; most happy in that insensibility which kept me ignorant of those miseries by which I was surrounded. At the termination of that period, after having

slept most profoundly for fourteen hours, during which time large drops of perspiration had continued to pour from my face, I awoke perfectly restored to mental convalescence.

“I started up, threw back the curtains, and instantly perceived I was in the room I had been accustomed to occupy at Hartlebury. All those sensations and recollections, that seemed to have been in a state of stagnation, regained their place almost miraculously; and what was most astonishing, from the moment that my long benighted reason was restored, it appeared to have gained a renovation of strength, energy, and vigour, from its having lain so long in a state of torpidity. What made the case more surprising, from that era I have felt no relapse of an infliction, of which I shall ever entertain the greatest horror, as most humiliating to man, reducing him even below the brute creation,

creation, who are endowed with the powers of instinct.

“ I felt as if I had overslept myself, and sprang out of bed with an intention of dressing. In searching for my clothes I caught in the glass a view of my person ; I started back, dismayed at the figure it reflected : a pale, thin, cadaverous countenance ; haggard, sunken eyes ; and a head shorn of a profusion of light brown hair, by which it was once adorned. Vague images now floated through my lately clouded brain ; I determined to seek my father, and gain from him an explanation of what appeared to me so ambiguous.

“ A suit of black habiliments that lay on a chair, attracted my notice ; an involuntary sigh burst from my bosom ; I put them on, and hastened out of the room. In my descent to the parlour I met no person ; I entered the study—it appeared empty ; an impervious solemn gloom seemed to shed its influence

around. Of passing time I knew nothing, and thought the hour might be too early for my mother's rising; I went through the kitchen to the garden, in hopes of meeting somebody to answer my inquiries: that, like the rest of the apartments, was deserted.

“On my entering the court-yard, I met old Joan, with a pail of milk in her hand; the good creature had been my father's nurse, and for many years a pensioner in the family. Rejoiced to see my early acquaintance, I rushed eagerly forward, seized her vacant hand, exclaiming—‘My kind woman, what is become of all the inhabitants of the Parsonage? where are my parents? shew me to them.—Is it not yet breakfast-time? for I feel a sensation of hunger even to faintness.’

“The ghosts of all her ancestors could not have had a greater effect on Joan's nerves, than the sound of my voice; she threw down her burthen, darting

darting from me with the agility of fifteen, and ran screaming into the house—
‘God a marcy, save me from my poor mazed master, for a taulks again, and I be afeard it be a sign he is going to be obstroperous!’—While she was thus apostrophizing, I stood looking after her, lost in amazement.

“Honour, a servant that had lived with my parents from the time of my birth, alarmed by her clamorous outcries, now appeared. As I advanced, and asked with much rationality an explanation of all I saw, the poor creature, who was little less frightened than Joan at hearing me speak, and seeing me in a state of convalescence, stood trembling, while the tears ran plentifully down her cheeks, hardly knowing whether she ought to sorrow or rejoice as she reflected to what acute sufferings I was condemned by my return to reason.

“She

“ She tried to recover herself; desired me to go into the parlour with her, and she would make me some tea, for it was six o'clock in the evening: after I had taken some refreshment, she would answer all my questions. I now observed she likewise wore the sable weeds of woe; I followed her quietly, eager to have those ambiguous appearances, at which I began to feel alarmed, elucidated.

“ On her re-entrance with the tea-equipage, I earnestly entreated her to remove the veil of mystery that seemed to envelope me. I inquired if I had been ill; for so I judged from my looks and my weakness, though totally unconscious by what disease I had been reduced to my present state. I asked if my father and mother were well—why I did not see them?—Honour stood irresolute; she answered my interrogatories only with her tears; it was true she saw me once more a rational being; she

she therefore dreaded to communicate intelligence she was fearful would again plunge me into that horrible situation from which I was so recently recovered.

“ She was extricated from her dilemma by seeing Mr. Horton, the village Doctor, ride into the court-yard ; she abruptly left me, and after a short period returned, ushering him into the room. Instantly recognizing one of my earliest friends, I arose, shook him cordially by the hand, and in appropriate terms expressed my pleasure at seeing him in such good health. He heard and viewed me with as evident surprise as my other auditors ; I told him of all that had happened since I awoke, expressing my wonder that every person appeared to look at me with a mixture of fear and astonishment ; a behaviour of which I had in vain requested an explanation.

“ Mr.

“ Mr. Horton was convinced I was in perfect possession of my senses, though to him it appeared most miraculous ; all of the Faculty who had been consulted upon my case, having given it as their opinion that mine was an incurable insanity, as I had never experienced one lucid interval ; that it must be a total torpidity of mental sensation, and reason could never be restored to re-action. Mine was, no doubt, a singular case, in which God evinced his incomprehensible power by ways inexplicable to short-sighted mortals.

“ The good Doctor, who could no longer evade my earnest entreaties for some account of my family, was obliged to unfold a tale that “ harrowed up my soul,” preparatory to seeing my father, whom he now left me to apprise of my wonderful recovery. Had not my faeulties acquired an almost supernatural strength by their late *interregnum* from reflection, what I was fated to

to hear must have again drawn Reason from her lately restored throne.

“ The worthy Mr. Horton had been my father’s friend, companion, and confidant, even from his boyish days; to him every circumstance of the family concerns was known. He prepared to satisfy my impatience, commencing his story from the period when the receipt of Mr. Edward Lurcher’s letter, touching the before overstrained nerves of sensibility, had occasioned frantic delirium; which being exhausted by its own violence, the brain became a vacuum, and the body, no longer acervated by the active principle, sunk into a state of stupid inanity.

“ I will repeat the woes he unfolded, as if Mr. Horton was the speaker, without the interruption occasioned by my agonized feelings, because it will shorten a narrative, which, had you not from your situation been precluded from all other

other employment and amusement, must have already exhausted your patience by its length.



CHAP. II.

“MY dear John, no person can rejoice more sincerely at seeing you restored to your senses than I do; God grant it had been his good pleasure to have let it been so six months ago! then many of those misfortunes I am about to relate might never have happened. But, as your worthy father used to tell us in the pulpit, that we ought patiently to submit to the decrees of our Creator, who knows what is

is best for us, I will not presume to murmur, but proceed in the task assigned me.

“ After receiving that letter from Mr. Edward Lurcher, you lay three months quite raving mad; and when, by the unremitting care of that good young man, Mr. Trentham, and the advice he procured, the fever left you, your mind was a *caput mortuum*, that nothing could re-animate. He had constantly corresponded with Mr. Carter from the commencement of your illness, and now, with much delicacy, informed him of the real state of your disease, and his resolution not to leave you till he had delivered you safe into the hands of your family.

“ In consequence of this generous determination, twelve months since he arrived with you at Hartlebury. The sight of her son was a death-stroke to your poor mother; to behold her first-born, the pride of her heart, reduced to incurable

nable idiotism, was more than she could sustain. This shock was aided by the behaviour of your sister, who had been some time returned on their hands by Lady Lurcher; she was such a fine high-bred Madam, nothing was good enough for her to eat, drink, or wear; she would not keep company with my girls; or any of the village lads and lasses; she did nothing but cry, and take on for the fine clothes and the great folks she had been used to in London.

“ This conduct of their daughter, the resentment of the Lurcher family, and your dreadful visitation constantly before their eyes, bore heavy on both your parents. Your father exerted himself, and even appeared cheerful before your mother, to support her spirits; alas! poor soul, she had received her death-wound from the time of your arrival; she never held up her head after, but literally expired of grief, within two months, in the arms of her afflicted husband.

“ A few

“ A few days before her demise, she ordered you to be brought into her room, embraced, and blessed you ; and her last breath was employed in praying that God would restore you to reason, to be a comfort to your father, and to your sister a protector, for whom she always had her fears.—Oh ! it was a pitiable sight to behold, which drew tears of agony from me, who, from my profession, am but too much accustomed to scenes of misery ; to see the struggles between the resigned Christian and the affectionate husband, as the Rector bent over his expiring wife, promising that he would try to live for the sake of his imbecile son and unfortunate daughter ; while you, unaffected by the surrounding scene, viewed with an eye of vacancy the heart-rending objects. Laurina, I am sorry to say, though endowed with sensation, appeared little more affected than yourself by the death of Mrs. Carter, from whom her love was weaned

weaned by being taken away so young, and educated in a style so much superior to what her expectations in life warranted.

“This was the cause of Laurina’s ruin; and I hope it will be a warning to other parents, to deter them from allowing any motive, however plausible in appearance, to induce them to give up their children to the management of great folks, to put false notions into their heads, and then, in the caprice of the moment, return them to the house of their fathers, from whose usages having been so long estranged, they are miserable themselves, and contribute by their wilful ways to torment all around them.

“After the death of Mrs. Carter, your father was accustomed to shut himself up whole days in the little parlour he called his study, making you his companion; he used to converse with you, as if you could comprehend and
answer

answer him. I often told him, that the having you constantly before his eyes, increased his sorrow, and added to his melancholy. He always answered, 'I have not, my friend, long to abide in this world, and it is a pleasure to me to behold my boy; for, in his careworn features, I can still trace the likeness of my sainted Susannah.'

"Six months had now elapsed since your return, when the season for Sir Thomas Lurcher's family revisiting the Grange arrived, and with them came a large party of visitors: among the rest, a Nobleman high in power, not young, but specious, artful, and still handsome. He had been personally known to your sister when she resided with Lady Lurcher, and soon found an opportunity of renewing the acquaintance during her walks; for she still loitered with lingering steps about the park, throwing longing looks toward that mansion, whose

whose doors were now shut against her for ever.

“ This intercourse was carried on for some time without being at all suspected by Mr. Carter ; his state of health threatened a rapid decay, his appearance was that of a man verging on eternity, and his mind totally absorbed in preparing for a better world. He seldom left his study, or saw Laurina but at meals, or went farther from the Parsonage than to perform the duties of his function, which, while he had strength left to mount the pulpit, he never delegated to another. Laurina, who had not paid him much attention, was now seldom visible ; her spirits seemed to have returned since the appearance of his Lordship in the country. At this period, the young Vicar of Springfield came to the Grange, purposely, as he told Mr. Carter, to see him and you, whom he folded in his arms, and wept
over

over like a child ; he expressed his sorrow for the troubles of your family, and the cruel conduct of his own. He told your father he had once offered his hand to Laurina—she had peremptorily refused him ; that he was still ready to marry her, if she could be prevailed upon to revoke his sentence, for he thought it incumbent on him to share his fortune with her whom he had ever loved, and to do an act of justice to one whom the capricious treatment of his parents had driven from their protection.

“ Mr. Carter, from whom, my dear John, I had this conversation, replied, that he felt the utmost gratitude for his generous intentions respecting Laurina ; but he had weighty objections against accepting his offers. From what he was enabled to gather of his daughter’s disposition and pursuits, he was sorry to say she did not appear calculated to make a man of his temper happy, as a

domestic companion ; nor would he ever consent to a child of his becoming the wife of any man, against the approbation of his parents.

‘ My dear Edward, never be induced by any consideration, however justifiable may be your motives, to marry without receiving a father’s blessing on your union. Behold in me, and my family, the ill-fated victims of a parent’s curse: he prayed that my disobedience to him might be visited upon my children ; see it, alas ! realized in my unhappy boy, the pride of my youth, the prop of my age ;—view, dear Edward, this blighted sapling, withering as it stands, a sad memento of my crime.—God grant the evil may stop here !—but I fear I have not yet drank the bitter cup to the dregs.

‘ The anathema announced against myself I could have borne with proper resignation, had I alone been the sufferer, because conscious of being the aggressor ;

aggressor ; but the vengeance called down on the heads of my unoffending children, weighs heavy at my heart. I look on myself as the destroyer of my Susannah, the scourge of my race ; it is for my transgressions they are afflicted. My dear pupil, give me the satisfaction to hear you promise you will not place yourself in my dreadful, heart-rending situation, by wilfully disobeying the positive commands of your father.'

“ This good young man, whose feelings were wrought up to agony by the pity-moving words of his worthy preceptor, flung himself into his arms ; entreating that he would be comforted, and not suppose a just and merciful God would descend to punish one of the best of his creatures, through the whole of his generation, for the unjust anger and violent acerbities of one of the worst of his species.

“ He promised, if it would gratify him, and ease his present perturbations,

he never would marry without the consent of Sir Thomas and Lady Lurcher. He now frequently stole out from the Grange, to come and sit with Mr. Carter and yourself, and once brought Miss Florentina with him. Poor thing! she was so much shocked at seeing you, that it threw her into hysteric fits; I was obliged to be sent for, and she was recovered from her indisposition sufficiently to be got home before she was missed. It terminated in a low fever, that confined her for many weeks to her chamber.

“ While the Rector was deriving something like comfort from the society of his amiable pupil, and I thought his health amended, there happened a terrible disaster, that filled the measure of his woes. One morning, Honour entered his chamber, pale as death, with a letter in her hand, which she said she found laying on Miss Laurina’s table, when she went into the room, as was
her

her custom, to call her to breakfast ; to her astonishment she discovered that she had not been in bed the whole night. She had looked in the drawers, which were emptied of all their contents.

“ Mr. Carter, having been long taught to expect something bad from his daughter’s conduct, tore open the epistle, which I have this moment procured from your father for your information.”

Mr. Horton then proceeded to read the following letter :—

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I think little apology necessary for taking from your sight a daughter, whose society you never valued, whose *agrémens*, your limited knowledge of existing manners precluded you from properly appreciating. I am, therefore, assured you can suffer no deprivation from my absence. Shut up in your study, with your favourite *automaton*,

my present pleasure or future settlement were never objects of your consideration. I feel it therefore incumbent on me to form my own establishment; I fly to scenes more congenial to my taste than the ivied walls and trees of doleful cypress, the only objects that Hartlebury Parsonage has offered to my view for nine tedious months!— I leave them with the man of my choice, to share with him all those joys, rank, power, splendour, and riches can bestow on their votaries.

“ Trouble not yourself to follow me, to induce me to return; it would be an useless attempt. Our ideas of happiness are diametrically opposite: you suppose it to be found in rural solitude and quiet content; I, nurtured in the hot-bed of luxurious pleasures, early initiated into the arcana of gaiety and fashion, pursuing with increased avidity the intoxicating whirl of public amusements, can find no gratification but in
following

following the system I learned from precept, and imbibed by example.

“ If I am wrong in my ideas, faulty in my actions, you must blame yourself ; we are all born alike in infancy, education forms our youth, and propels the actions of maturity. The savage, ferocious African, by culture, becomes sensible, literate, humanized. Had you brought me up under your roof at Harlebury, I might have been an unambitious village-maid :—reared in the family of Lady Lurcher, receiving all the adventitious aids of a woman of *ton*, eagerly adopting the doctrine constantly inculcated by her, that it depended on myself to be a great lady—my mind imbued with vanity, flattered by the adulation of my admirers, I believed it easy to gratify all my ambitious aspirations ; and I should have done so, but for my brother’s temerity in aspiring to the heart of his patron’s daughter.—This ruined all my brightening prospects ;

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spects; to him I owe the being sent from the house of Sir Thomas Lurcher.

“In the sombre shades of the Parsonage I beheld my evanescent hopes evaporate. Those men who followed my steps, lived on my smiles, and would have shared their name and fortune with the *élève* of Lady Lurcher, I was convinced would be emboldened to offer terms of a *very* different nature to the daughter of a poor parson. One only of my numerous train followed me to this seclusion; he has offered to restore me to all the joys of freedom, and, with renovated *eclat*, to that world, out of which, with my real or acquired propensities (no matter which name you give them), I cannot exist. May you, dear Sir, be restored to health and happiness at the Parsonage; and, if it can add to your gratifications, be assured I shall experience every felicity in the choice I have made.”

“This

“ This letter, so utterly devoid of feeling, so cuttingly indifferent, acknowledging with such unblushing effrontery her future intentions, addressed by the most undutiful of daughters to the tenderest of parents, the best of men, gave the finishing stroke to his comforts in this life, and will soon consign him to a premature grave. The shock of Laurina’s ingratitude, and abandoned intentions, was too much for his weak frame to contend against.

“ I thank God, who has restored you to his prayers, to close his eyes, and receive his blessing. He has settled all his worldly affairs, and his will is in my possession. I had eased the mind of your father by promising that, till you had recovered your reason, I would take you home, and you should be unto me as a son. I sincerely rejoice that you are again yourself, and will be able to act without a guardian.”——

“ I poured forth the grateful effusions of my heart to the good Mr. Horton, for his friendly attentions to my parent, and his intended kindness respecting myself. The sad recital of the misfortunes of my family had occasioned me to shed a deluge of tears; not a single one had moistened my parched eyelids since my illness. This great relief to oppressed nature was doubtless in this trying moment of infinite service to me, and prevented a relapse of my late insanity.

“ In answer to my inquiries after the inhabitants of the Grange, who, by some strange fatality, appeared to be so connected with the Parsonage, that the latter were destined to owe to them all their joys and sorrows, I was informed they were now in London; that Lord Burford had recovered of his wound before Mr. Trentham returned with me to England; and he had renewed his addresses to Florentina, who
had

had positively rejected him. Lady Lurcher's fears of her being united to me, no longer existing, she had desisted from urging her on that point, but was still in expectation of a more exalted offer.

“ Thomas, the *hopes* of the family, from being an idle, dissipated loungeur, was, by associating with Lord Burford and his set, become an abandoned libertine, a professed *roué*, a gamester at the Cocoa-Tree, a knowing-one on the turf, and frequently an umpire at boxing-matches. Edward had visited his preceptor, and condoled with him on the conduct of Laurina—it was all that could be done in a case of such hopelessness ;—he had taken an affecting leave of his revered friend, and received what he feared would be his last blessing, before he returned to Springfield ; being resolved to wholly reside with his parishioners, and perform himself the duties of his sacred function.

“ I heard with gratitude that my generous Trentham had, since my return, been twice at Hartlebury to see me, and constantly wrote to my father, to inquire if there were any hopes of my restoration to convalescence. It was with extreme regret I was informed that I should be precluded from paying him my personal respects, as he had some months since left England, to attend a sister of his late father's to the southern provinces of France, who, being supposed in a consumption, had been ordered by her physicians to inhale the restorative breezes of a milder climate.

“ This lady was extremely fond of her nephew, who losing his mother when very young, had resided with her till of a proper age to be sent to a public school. He wished to shew her the duty of a son, therefore would not hear of her travelling so far from all her relatives, consigned alone to mercenary hirelings,

hirelings; he insisted on being her escort, with unexampled philanthropy, leaving all the joys that youth, health, and fortune offered to his acceptance, to attend the querulous complaints of a suffering invalid, by his unremitting attentions attenuating the pains of disease, and, with the lively sallies of his wit, dissipating the languors of a sick chamber. I honoured my friend for his motive, though I lamented that I could not see him, to pour out my griefs in his bosom, avail myself of his sensible advice, and offer my grateful thanks for his care and attention to an isolated maniac.

“ Mr. Horton sat with me till eleven o'clock, exerting his well-meaning endeavours to comfort, and give me confidence in the Creator of all good, who, he said, had without doubt restored me to reason for wise purposes, and that I ultimately should reap a due reward for my afflicting trials.

“ The Doctor, having visited my father, and cheered him with the joyful intelligence of my mind being restored to a state of perfect convalescence, promised he would return in the morning, and introduce me to his arms, if he found him able to sustain the transition from excessive grief to the transport that my presence would naturally occasion.

“ He desired me by no means to attempt forcing myself into the presence of my parent without him; recommending me now to retire for the night, and, if possible, compose myself to sleep: I promised to follow these directions. On his departure, Honour entered, who viewed me with tears of joy, and offered up her gratulations to Heaven that she was once more permitted to see her dear young master in his senses. She made a bason of whey, with cowslip wine; entreating me to drink it after I was in bed, observing it was a rare
good

good thing, which would make me rest better than *ladlum*, that she remembered having taken once, and it made her see *ghostes*, goblins, and fairies, and frightened her out of her wits !

“ Pleased with her kindness, I swallowed my good old Honour’s somniferous nostrum, and really slumbered through the night, in despite of the agonizing narrative I had just heard from Mr. Horton. Whether this arose from an effort of nature, whose newly restored power claimed rest, or the opiate virtues of honest Honour’s posset, I have never been able to ascertain.

CHAP. III.

“MR. HORTON, true to his appointment, and feeling for my anxiety, was in my room at eight o'clock, and pronounced my pulse to be free from fever. We breakfasted together; he afterwards visited his patient, whom he found as eager to see and embrace me, as I was desirous to throw myself at his feet, and implore forgiveness for all the sorrows that my passions and follies had occasioned him to suffer.

“I found, by the information of Mr. Horton, that I had been accustomed, during my late malady, to be brought into

into Mr. Carter's chamber, and placed in a chair by his bed-side; that on the day antecedent to my miraculous recovery, I had exhibited an unusual degree of stupor, which pervaded the only two faculties that were now left me, that of eating and walking; both of these I had done instinctively.

“ Mr. Horton, being then at the Parsonage, felt my hand, the palm of which appeared moist; a circumstance that had not before occurred during the period of my illness, my skin being ever hot and dry. He therefore augured it was a good omen, ordered me into a warm bed, and weak whey to be administered at intervals, some person sitting constantly with me.

“ This devolved upon old Joan, Honour not being able to leave my father. I lay fourteen hours in a profound sleep, while, from my head and face, poured down large drops of water; this was doubtless an effort of kind Nature,

Nature, to throw off the morbid matter from my oppressed brain. The Doctor had seen me frequently in the course of that time, expecting some change in the animal functions would appear for the better, on my awaking; but never dared flatter himself with so complete and wonderful a recovery.

“Joan had only left me about a quarter of an hour, to milk her cow, because, she said, the poor *beastes* was calling to her under the window, and she thought she might venture to steal away for a bit, as she firmly believed that I was on my death-bed, and that I should, what she called, *doze* away like a lamb. It was in her absence I might justly be said to receive new life; you will not therefore wonder at the poor creature's surprise, when she saw me rush into the court-yard, and once more heard the sound of my voice, for I had not uttered a syllable for the last twelve months.

“The

“The meeting with my father was almost too much for me to sustain, though I made every exertion to endure it with fortitude. We fainted in each other’s embrace. Mr. Horton was prepared to expect such consequences; therefore we were, by his judicious efforts, recalled to a state of existence. Tears, the ameliorators of grief, Nature’s *own* medicine to relieve the surcharged heart, softened the asperities of our sorrows; and after paying a plentiful tribute to past woes, they enabled us to derive comfort and support from the mutual interchange of consoling confidence.

“My parent was but the shadow of his former self; pining care had worn him to the bone. On my leaving the apartment, Mr. Horton candidly informed me I must not flatter myself with expectations of his recovery; that he was going down to the grave with slow, but perceptible degrees; his
original

original disease was sorrow, the canker-worm of vitality, which had sapped the foundation of life; and the structure must now inevitably sink to the tomb.

“ In the evening, after I had left my father for the night, having procured the keys, I entered the humble church of Hartlebury, where were deposited the sacred remains of my sainted mother, in view of that pulpit where, for so many years, with modest meekness and pious fervour, her husband had taught his little flock their duty to God and their neighbours, exhorting them to live in friendly amity, that they might die in Christian hope.

“ I prostrated myself on the cold stone that covered the dust of my much-loved parent;—I poured out in prayer the emanations of my soul to the Omnipotent Creator of all things;—I thanked him for my restoration to health, my renovation to intellect, and hoped that, once more being permitted to distinguish good from evil, I might be

be enabled to sustain the troubles yet in store for me with becoming fortitude, and submit patiently to my inflictions, without sinking into despondence.

“ I called on the shade of my beatified mother to forgive her penitent son those sorrows he had occasioned her to suffer. I thanked her for the blessing she had bequeathed me, and the orisons she had offered up for my restoration to sense, that had found favour from the Most High. These fervent aspirations, addressed to my heavenly and earthly Parent, tranquillized the perturbations of my ever ardent mind, which, as they sprang from the pure effusions of a contrite heart, I felt assured would rise to the heaven of heavens, and be an acceptable sacrifice to Omniscience.

“ My heart lightened by having performed my duty, I retired from the church with renovated spirits. Taught to value my restored reason by its late deprivation, I was truly grateful for the
blessing,

blessing, for it enabled me to render comfortable the last days of my revered father. Mr. Horton assured me that my tender attentions had likewise prolonged them, for he was pronounced to be dying when my senses returned, and he lived two months after that era.

“ I passed my whole time at his bedside, conversing with him, reading the Scriptures, praying by, and with him. I had the consolatory pleasure of perceiving that my society, and endeavours to soften the asperity of his misfortunes, were not unsuccessful. His mind was calm and resigned, looking forward to that change, for which his whole correct life had been a series of preparation.

“ He wished to die in peace with all men, relatives, friends, and enemies ; he therefore expressed a desire to see his brothers, to bless and forgive them for their unnatural desertion of him ever since the hour of my birth. I wrote directly

directly to my uncles, acquainting them with his wishes, and praying to see them immediately. They had long lived separate from each other: Jeremiah, the eldest, still occupied that estate which ought to have been my father's, by right of primogeniture; he had been married, but was then a widower without children. The younger, George, had purchased, with his share of the property, a large farm at some miles' distance, and was still a bachelor. They both were very rich, maugre the fortune left them by my inexorable grandfather; for all they had taken in hand had prospered and "flourished like a green bay-tree."

"My letter, written with pathos, touched their hitherto flinty hearts; they both arrived at Hartlebury the day after its receipt. The meeting between them and their dying relation was truly affecting: he embraced, forgave, blessed, and prayed for them. He recommended me strongly to their affection,

affection, calling me the most dutiful of sons, avowing that I had, by my unwearied attentions, softened the stroke of death to him; and he hoped that I should be spared to render the close of their lives as comfortable and serene as I had done his, by my assiduous tenderness. He then offered up the most fervent orisons for his misguided daughter, entreating that she might be permitted to see the evil of her ways, and, by a future life of penitence and contrition, merit that forgiveness of her Heavenly Father, that her earthly parent most sincerely bestowed.

“ He now desired to receive the holy sacrament with all his family; it was administered by a neighbouring clergyman, and partook of by his sorrowing relations and weeping domestics. This last duty performed, feeling perfectly composed, he desired to be left to repose. He slept quietly about
three

three hours; when he awoke, we were summoned to his chamber. Mr. Horton felt his almost expiring pulse, and whispered me that it would not be long before all was over; he called upon me to exert my fortitude, and not retain my father, by witnessing my grief, from a better world, on which he was now at the threshold.

“ He retained his senses unimpaired to the last moment; calling me to him, he threw his feeble arms round my neck, and said in broken sentences—“ The great error of my life was in *one* instance disobeying the commands of an unrelenting parent. The curse he denounced against me, ever lay heavy at my heart; its influence has pursued me through my existence;—may my sufferings in this world expiate my offence, and the dreadful anathema no longer pursue my unoffending son, on whom, with my parting breath, I pronounce a fervent blessing !”

“ He continued to speak words of comfort to his weeping repentant brothers and his sorrowing dependants, till his voice gradually died away ; when, still sensible of his approaching dissolution, he appeared as praying to his Maker ; his lips, though they uttered no sounds, continued to move. After an awful pause, he turned on me his languid, half-closed eyes, laid his cold face to mine, and breathed out his soul in a soft sigh, without appearing to feel any struggle. He truly died the death of the righteous—Oh may my end be like his !



CHAP. IV.

“ I WILL not attempt to delineate the poignancy of my grief when-sundered from the icy arms of my beatified sire, and restored to a sense of my irreparable loss ; because I fear already you may have deemed me prolix, and too minute in my descriptions of those circumstances and characters, which compose the tissue of my eventful story.

“ Should such charges be brought against me, the only exculpation I have to offer is, that I meant your edification, and that you may be enabled to profit by my dear-bought experience. I have, therefore, in the course of my

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story,

story, attempted to trace the vices and follies of human nature to their *source* : to do this we must not judge by the exterior ; whoever skims the surface of worldly knowledge, will catch at air-blown bubbles, or fill their hands with the straws that float in the stream of public opinion.

“ The speculative observer of existing manners, forms not his ideas of mankind *en masse* ; he treads with caution the devious path, divides and subdivides the congregated heap into small particles, by which method he is enabled to understand of what it is composed, and how to estimate its real value. This necessary and useful information can only be obtained by studying the meanders of the subtle mind ; it is by diverging into the recesses of the human heart, that we can decide with promptness on its motives for action.

“ The study of mankind should be man ;—it is, believe me, the first theorem

theorem that ought to engage the pursuit of a rational being ;—for he will never become an adept in the acquirement by turning over the elaborate treatises of sage philosophy, or all the learned lore his book-room contains.

“ To read the character of your species, you must condescend to mix with the heterogeneous crowd, that are classed under the denomination of the fashionable world. You must watch them with sedulous attention, look with a microscopic eye into those delicate fibres and finer *traits* that connect causes with effects. You must follow them through all the various changes, from childhood to puberty, to form a proper judgment how they will act that part of the drama assigned for them to perform on the great stage of existence ; you must trace them from serious business to *public* amusements, see them unbend in their *private* convivial parties, not repressed by fear, nor awed by
D 3 interest ;

interest; view their behaviour in the trying situations of son, husband, father, friend; observe how they conduct themselves in the joyful ebullitions of unexpected good fortune, how suffer with enduring humility the trying reverse; behold their patience in sickness, their resignation in sorrow, and their fortitude at the hour of death.

“ To do this, my friend, requires unremitting attention, and discriminating perseverance; few gain a competent knowledge of their species, because they are too soon disgusted with the disagreeable objects they meet on their road, and *tire* of the race long before they reach the goal. Fewer still chuse to be instructed by the wisdom of those travellers who give not over the pursuit, till they have attained the *end* of their journey. The pride of man is such, that he would rather be amused with reading a modern Novel, which is a *mere* story book, or soar into the regions of

of romantic fiction, to find entertainment among legions of embattled heroes, and goblins dire, than condescend to receive improvement from the information of others, that he is either too vain, too indolent, or too ignorant to acquire by his own exertions.

“ My uncles wished me to quit the Parsonage, and return with them ; but this I declined, resolved not to leave the remains of what was once so dear to me, till I had followed it to the last receptacle of mortality. A week after his demise, my father was deposited by the side of his beloved Susannah, attended to the grave by his brothers, myself, and all his parishioners ; his best eulogium was pronounced by their sighs and tears. I returned with Mr. Carter to Nettlebed Farm, after having wrote to Sir Thomas Lurcher an account of my father's death. I received an answer from the steward, informing me of the living having been promised by

his young master ever since the late incumbent's illness had been announced, and the new Rector would soon be at Hartlebury to take possession.

"Therefore, after having given Honour sufficient furniture for a cottage, with whom my late parent's nurse, old Joan, was to reside, I ordered the rest to be sold; resolved to leave a neighbourhood that was to me a constant memento of past joys and sorrows, to seek out the abode of my misguided sister, and offer her an asylum from humiliating misery, if she had seen her error, and sincerely repented of her conduct.

"You will, my friend, be perhaps surprised that I have so long been totally silent on the subject nearest my heart—my never to be forgotten, my adored Florentina. My passion for that charming woman is as fixed as Fate, and forms a part of my existence; but it is not now, as before my illness, violent
and

and effervescent; it is a pure, steady, unalterable attachment. I no longer think of my own gratification, when opposed to the duty and interest of Florentina.

“ In the frequent conversations I had held with my parent on the subject of my love, his sensible admonitions had calmed those perturbations that had once raged in my breast; he taught me that it was a *selfish* consideration which induced me to seek my own pleasure, when the object of my choice must, in becoming my wife, disobey her parents, forfeit her claims on their fortune, and set at defiance the opinion of the world. He prayed most fervently I might one day be rewarded for all my cares by receiving the hand of Florentina; though he made me solemnly promise I would not seek to warp her from her duty, or accept it without the consent of Sir Thomas and Lady Lurcher; or till she was free to make an election, that

would not entail a *curse* upon her children.

“ Convinced by his arguments, and yielding to his reasons, I quieted his parental feelings by an assurance that I would strictly adhere to his commands, and never become the husband of Florentina but with the approbation of her friends. I wrote my determination both to her and Edward ; the latter had been sent for to town, at the request of Sir Thomas, who was very ill. He had literally pined from the period his lady and his eldest son had prevailed on him to estrange himself from my father, his old friend, associate, and companion, to whose sensible converse and good advice he owed his reclamation from error ; having, on his return to the Grange, weaned him from those follies that had consigned him to a six years’ seclusion.

“ Sir Thomas reflected on the ingratitude of forsaking, in his age and sor-

ROWS,

rows, the man who had devoted a considerable portion of his youth to his comfort, and the education of his sons in the paths of religion and virtue. These ideas impressed his waking thoughts, and haunted his nightly slumbers; his heart yearned to hold out the hand of reconciliation to the worthy Vicar, but he had delegated in his anger a power to his lady, which availing herself of his present debility, she was resolved to retain, watching him so sedulously, that she effectually prevented all intercourse between him and the Rectory.

“ His thoughts engendering strange fancies, his spirits became a prey to moping melancholy; and when informed of my mother’s demise, my insanity, Laurina’s elopement, my father’s consequent despair and sickness, the good-natured Baronet grew worse every day; condemning himself as the primary cause of *all* these accumulating ills, he

shut himself up in his chamber, and would not be comforted.

“ Mr. Horton was sent for, but he could not minister “to a mind diseased;” he frankly told him so. Sir Thomas was hurried to London, under the common excuse of procuring better advice, but in fact to hinder a meeting taking place between him and the wretched inhabitants of Hartlebury. He grew evidently worse after his return to town; and on being told, without any preparation, by Lady Lurcher, that the Rector of Hartlebury had died of a broken heart, he replied, “ That is my summons—I shall soon follow him.” He lived just ten days after this declaration; long enough to see Edward, give him his blessing, and recommend his sister to his care.

“ Her Ladyship, after having exhibited all the outward and visible signs of woe, recollected that she could not, with any propriety, appear in the gay world

world for twelve tedious months, and some conscientious twinges hindered her from passing the dreary seclusion in the precincts of Hartlebury ; besides her fears were now awakened, lest, as I had recovered my reason, I might renew my addresses to Florentina. This occasioned her to take a prompt resolution to depute her son Edward (the young Baronet declined the task), to attend the remains of his father to the family mausoleum. She herself, with her daughter and attendant *suite*, in all the paraphernalia of grief, set out for the Continent, being resolved to pass the time of mourning in her beloved Italy ; telling her sons she knew not when she should be able to return and reside in that country, where every object would remind her of the *irreparable* loss of dear Sir Thomas, the agreeable companion of her youth, the most affectionate of friends, the most tender of husbands !

“ I was

“ I was made acquainted with these arrangements by a letter from Edward, and of his intention of seeing his father deposited at the Grange, in the tomb of his ancestors. When the corpse was within a day's journey of the Manor-House, my uncles and myself rode out to meet it, at the head of his numerous tenantry and domestics, to whom he had ever been a kind landlord, and a merciful master. When we joined the mournful cavalcade, I can truly say I paid the tribute of sincere sorrow, and shed the genuine tears of regret on the grave of my early benefactor, who, had he been left to follow the natural dictates of his good disposition, would never have deserted my father, or withdrawn his protection from his family. Peace to his *manes* !

“ Edward remained a week at the Grange, and, at his earnest request I was his companion. Our mutual exertions to comfort each other for the loss
of

of a parent, were not wholly unsuccessful. I have before observed, that the Rector of Springfield kept no Curate, but was himself the pastor of his flock; he therefore prepared to return to the Vicarage, pressing me to accompany him. I declined accepting his invitation from two motives: first, I could not yet bear to behold the spot where I had passed the halcyon days of early youth, and witnessed the pure happiness, smiling content, and reciprocal affections of, I hope I may without presumption say, my now beatified parents.

“ My second reason was, that I had promised my father I would make every effort to see my sister, and attempt to open her eyes to the wickedness of the life to which she had voluntarily devoted herself. But he had extorted from me a promise to use only gentle means to enforce my arguments, not to
6 seek,

seek, from her base and abandoned betrayer, what the world denominates honourable satisfaction, but to leave him to his God.

“ My friend Edward and I took a more solemn and impressive leave of each other than either the time or distance at which we were to be separated, appeared to warrant. Most likely it was a sad *presentiment* of what has since intervened, and we shall meet no more. He took the road to Wiltshire, and I to that hot-bed of crime, the metropolis ; where Vice stalks abroad at noon-day, assuming every varied shape to execute her purposes, unappalled by fear, undaunted by shame, unawed from present gratification by any dread of future punishment.

“ Edward, whose affection for Laurina had been imbibed in childhood, and strengthened with his growth, still loved her ; and, though to him she was
lost

lost for ever, he could not divest himself of feeling an interest in her fate; he therefore caused her steps to be traced, from the time she left Hartlebury. From his emissaries he learned, that she lived not in the house with her lordly seducer; that none of his numerous mistresses ever had done so. He was the most arch hypocrite and abandoned *debauchee* that had been produced in the regions of gallantry for the last thirty years.

“ Those unfortunate women that had once shone in the *higher* circles, like my ill-fated sister, and by that means could give any *eclat* to his amours, received from him, for the time they retained their power over his fickle, vitiated taste, a magnificent remuneration for their favours, calculated at once to flatter their vanity and his own, by their superb establishment.

“ Laurina’s

“Laurina’s appointment, as a fashionable impure, was in the most brilliant style of glittering luxury; her heart, lured by the intoxicating draught of pleasure, and her head turned by the elevation of her fancied grëatness, she beheld not the horrid chasm beneath her feet, which yawned ready to ingulph her, when those visionary joys should elude her grasp.

CHAP. V.

“EDWARD acquainted me with the name my sister had adopted, having, either from pride or prudence, dropped that of her humble sire; she was now known by the appellation of Mrs. Raby, and occupied a house in Harley Street, Cavendish Square. I arrived in town late in the evening, and took the resolution of visiting Laurina immediately, thinking it the best method to surprise her, fearful, if she was informed of my intentions, I should be refused an audience. On giving a smart rap at the door, it was answered by a handsome footman in a laced livery. I inquired
for

for his lady ;—after having eyed me for some time, deceived, I suppose, from my appearance, which was pale and meagre ; my hair, that had just begun to grow, hardly appeared beneath my hat ; my sable coat, made on the confines of Devonshire, was not quite in the *acme* of taste : I therefore presume that he took me for a poor author come to beg the honour of her name to a subscription list, or an humble petitioner under some other character, that sought relief from her bounty.

“ Almost shutting me out, he said his lady was dressing for the Opera, and would not be visible these two hours ; besides, it was not a proper time for persons to call on business—the morning should be devoted to that. I heeded not his insolent rebuff ; I thought this was the moment to impress Laurina’s heart with sorrow, at the period when it was buoyant with promised joys, and exhilarated by the hope of pleasure.

pleasure. If she was not totally hardened to the visitings of compunction, when informed by a weeping brother of the death of her *last* parent, she must *feel*, being conscious of having accelerated, if not occasioned it, by her dereliction from virtue, affection, and duty.

“ Finding the necessity of a friend in the castle, and knowing that money would do every thing with these satellites of greatness, I pressed a guinea into his palm, telling him I only wanted a quarter of an hour’s conversation with his lady, which was of much consequence to her as well as myself; and if he would procure it for me, he perceived I was both able and willing, by that small specimen, to reward him for the trouble of an introduction.

“ Viewing me with a scrutinizing look and a supercilious grin, while he tossed up the glittering bait, and caught it again, then threw it carelessly into
his

his waistcoat-pocket, having first assured himself of its sterling value, by rubbing it on his elbow, he thus addressed me :—

“ Why poz, I don’t know what to say to your request—it’s against orders to let in any *doubtful character* ; but you are really so generous, polite, and civil, your manners are so polished, and your appearance so prepossessing !” (here the fellow could hardly stifle a *laugh*), “ that I think I must even take the chance of a jobation to oblige you.”

“ Pride flushed my pallid cheek as I asked what he meant by a *doubtful character*—whether he supposed me to be a robber, or an assassin ?

“ Neither, my dear Sir ; what I alluded to by that expression was quite different from the nature in which you take it. ’Pon honour, I did not mean to offend you ; but there is a certain set of *poor* people that are, by the positive commands of the *rich* never to be admitted

mitted to their presence under any form, however specious."

"Of what description, I pray, are those unfortunate mortals that come under this form of exclusion? and by what intuitive perception do the gentlemen of your cloth distinguish them?"

"Not very easily, my dear Sir; they assume as many shapes as Proteus, and appear under as many different colours as the fabled cameleon. Trust me, it requires a clear head and a keen eye, to be always on your guard against their various tricks. I am tolerably quick now at reading faces—I have bought my experience dearly, as you shall hear; if you have any wish to be instructed in worldly knowledge, you have only to say so—I am your man for that sort of information."

"I nodded assent, and my pragmatical, garrulous companion, who evidently thought himself a very clever fellow, proceeded.

"When

“ When I made my *début* upon the town, Sir, I was a young man, a very young man indeed !—Lost three most lucrative *situations*, by not comprehending *doubtful characters*. On my first emerging from my northern ruralities, I was chosen head footman to Viscount Fellacre, a very honourable and profitable post : nothing to do till seven o'clock, his Lordship's hour of dining ; I stood behind his chair, a mere matter of form—my *double* did all the drudgery. I then attended my *Lud* to the Opera, or the *ruelle* of his *chère amie*, and repaired to finish the night at the clubs in St. James's Street, where I used to amuse myself with some of my friends in similar *situations*, playing for, or betting half-crowns. Being tolerably expert, I frequently picked up my five guineas in an evening ; my salary was but thirty-five pounds, but the various perquisites of office, and complimentary

plimentary *douceurs* more than doubled that sum by the end of the year."

"I sighed involuntarily at the extravagant follies and artificial wants of our modern men of fashion, whose pride, luxury, and indolence, engender and sustain such insects, to taunt and sting indigent merit. My blood boiled with honest indignation—I longed to instantly chastise the high-scented varlet; but curiosity to hear his tale to an end, and policy not to betray myself prematurely, restrained my arm. He had shewn me into a waiting-room before he commenced his conversation, observing that he could not introduce me to Mrs. Raby till the important business of the toilet was finished, which, he assured me, would not be till nine o'clock. I therefore resolved to amuse the tedious period, by encouraging him to proceed in his account of the different (to use his softening term) *situations* he had enjoyed.

“ Pray, Sir, how came you to leave Viscount Fellacre’s family, that you say was so well calculated to contribute to your pleasures and profit ?”

“ An unfortunate misnomer of mine, an unlucky mistake ; his *Ludship’s* father being then alive, he only enjoyed a title by courtesy, of course was not one of those Nobles happily exempted from the impertinent interference of the laws of the realm ; his affairs were a little deranged, owing to the splendour of his appointments, and he had given positive orders not to admit any *doubtful characters* ; it being just at that time a general election, he was one morning drawing on his boots to set off to be rechosen by Ministerial influence, as a decayed Member of the rotten Borough of Swallowbribe.”

“ I don’t perceive how the Viscount’s being in or out of the House, could possibly affect your interest, or lose you the protection of his Lordship.”

“ You

“ You shall hear, my dear Sir. At this unfortunate crisis, this *interregnum* in the life of a Parliament Man, this lapse between doubt and security, comes a grave looking Clergyman, tells me he must see *my Lud* on business that would not admit of delay ; being sent by Solicitor Engross, to settle about the advowson of a living in the gift of his *Ludship*, lately advertised for sale, after the death of the present incumbent, designated to be eighty years of age, therefore most certainly there was no time to be lost. Fool that I was, not to espy the *cloven* foot under the Parson’s gown. I demurred ; he was pressing, clapping a guinea into my hand to purchase a pair of gloves ; I yielded to the *weighty* argument, introduced him to *my Lud’s* dressing room ;—what was my amazement to see him take *my Lud* with one hand, with the other produce a strip of paper, and hear *my Lud* exclaim—

“ Who the devil, you stupid scoundrel, have you let in upon me in this inauspicious moment?—Nothing less formidable than a *harpooner*, you execrable dolt.”

“ Pray what is the meaning of that term being applied to a Clergyman?”

“ Bless me, Sir, I perceive you are as ignorant as your humble servant was when he first came upon the *town*. *Harpooner* is a genteel, significant cant term for bailiff: a personage who strikes as sure, and fixes his devoted prey as firmly as the most expert whaler on the coast of Greenland.—The writ was for a thousand pounds, borrowed of old Stripskin, the usurer; only about half the cash had been touched by *my Lud*, the remainder went for premiums, expedition-money, and drawing the writings, into the pocket of Edward Engross, Esq. the most egregious rascal in his Majesty’s dominions. I well remember the jail-bird when he was better known under the

the title of Gipsy Ned, to whom I should then have been ashamed to speak. Now I have often the extreme mortification to be obliged to stand behind his chair.

“ Well, no matter, every one in his turn. Henry Hopeful is not apt to despond ; as I think I have some claims to her favour, I expect that blind jade, Madam Fortune, in one of her twist-about changes, will some day roll me into one of those chariots on whose cushions I now condescend to take my morning lounge. But to conclude my account of Viscount Fellacre : he swore, raged, and stamped about like a madman, would not listen to any apology for my mistake, insisting that no person was competent to form a part of the household of a great man, who could not intuitively perceive a *harpooner*, under whatever form he assumed. The latter was forced to quit his prey, the debt being bailed by two of the Tribe of
E 3 Isachar ;

Isachar ; and I was recommended to seek a *situation* more congenial to my stupidity, and eat my mutton in future with the odd quizzes that psy their butchers' bills !”

“ Well, Mr. Henry, I hope you followed such good advice, and, profiting by experience, let in no more *doubtful characters*. I am curious to hear an account of your next *situation*.”

“ That you shall, Sir, and then you can form your own judgment. I took up my abode with a rich Dowager, convinced there could be no fear of making the same mistake I did with *my Lud*. She was hard-hearted, penurious in the extreme, felt neither love nor friendship for any created being, except herself. Would you believe it, this woman was very desirous of being thought a martyr to her susceptibilities, that her bosom was the seat of charity, and her hand ever ready to relieve the sufferings of human nature? From the fame of her

her assumed character, her doors were assailed by the cries of the wretched, the prayers of the miserable, and the petitions of the necessitous ; none of those she ever saw, read, or relieved."

" How was it possible such a woman as you have described, could contrive to gain the name of a patroness, without paying the price of that enviable distinction?"

" Before I came upon the *town*, my dear Sir, I should have asked just such a simple question ; but I am now," he added, smiling with self-complacency, as he viewed his really well-formed person in a large mirror, " one of the initiated, and will let you into the history of her Grace's plan of *manœuvring*, by which she has acquired popularity cheaply. I can give you a few hints that, for their usefulness, will be worth double the *douceur* you presented me."



CHAP. VI.

“THE Duchess Dowager of Flintshire was a deep one : when any of her friends told a pitiable tale, she trembled, sighed, shed tears, and I have seen her even fetch a *faint*, to keep up the semblance of exquisite sensations, and then desire some person present to write the direction of the sufferers in her Atlas, she being too much unnerved by the soul-rending story to be enabled to hold the pencil. From the instant she quitted the room, she thought no more of the matter, troubled herself not to seek, nor ever intended to bestow any thing

thing to relieve the woes she had so hypocritically deplored."

"Are you not, Mr. Henry, dealing in the superlatives?—Is there really such a personage, or are you wandering in the flowery regions of fiction? It appears to me impossible that the world, credulous as it is, could be long imposed on by such an artificial character."

"Condescend to hear me to an end, and if I do not prove the verity of my assertions, brand me for a base knave!—Her Grace hid not her talents in a napkin; she loved her good deeds should be blazoned at noon-day, therefore bestowed not her donations on modest merit that shuns the light.

"This, Sir, was the secret, which I am now going to unfold, that enabled the Dowager to gain a name for Christian charity. Whenever any of those really worthy men, who go about seeking to do good, applied to her to aid their

works of righteousness, on the supposition that her heart was formed of materials like their own, she would make a piteous long face, and observe, she was always ready with the widow's *mite* to relieve private worth, or assist public munificence; but she gave so much to the former, that her means were very unequal to her wishes, when applied to in behalf of the latter. This answer transposed, served to keep up her consequence with both parties.

“ In all public subscriptions her donation stood the first in the list; her name glittered in gold letters against the walls of the Foundling, the Magdalen, the Middlesex, and almost all the hospitals in town. She was a yearly contributor to the Craven Street Society, instituted for the purpose of releasing prisoners for small debts. In the pompous enumeration of voluntary names for carrying on a war, or celebrating a victory, the Duchess Dowager of Flintshire's

shire's title stared you in the face, in every town and country newspaper.

“ Thus, by artful management, she effectually imposed on the public, and acquired what she so ardently sought, a character for being the most susceptible, generous, humane, and charitable of her sex ; while, in reality, she had not the smallest pretensions to either of those virtues. On my being inducted into the situation of her *maitre d'hotel*, I was, like others, imposed upon ; and really believing she was the good Samaritan, thought I could not better gain her favour than by introducing to her Grace all the objects that appeared to be worthy of her commiseration.

“ The porter, a surly Cerberus, who had taken a dislike to the cut of my countenance, wishing me to commit myself, never instructed me of the error I was going to fall into. I therefore, on a morning fatal to my advancement, ushered into the audience-room, through

which she must pass to her carriage, all those whose tales (for I took care to hear their story as caterer to her Grace), appeared to my simple ideas to merit her notice.

“ The first applicant was a genteel-looking woman, about the middle age ; she told me that her husband was a gentleman, who once possessed a good estate, but was now ruined by an overweening kindness for his fellow-creatures ; he was a philanthropist from nature, and such was his sensibility and sympathy with the wretched, that he could not hear a tale of woe without relieving its object : he therefore had often been the dupe of the artful and designing, his fortune had wasted away by degrees, and when he had no longer money to serve others, or himself, he had lent his name to bills, the drawers had absconded, and he was now laying in the extremes of sorrow, want, and sickness, in a loathsome prison, a dying martyr

to the impositions of bad men, and his own too credulous nature. The fame of her Grace's charities having reached them, she had ventured to wait on her, in hopes she would, by her bounty, alleviate the sufferings of the best of men, and husbands.

“ The second applicant was the shattered remains of an old Officer, having literally but one leg and one eye; this mutilated remnant of English valour had his face ornamented with many predatory scars. His case was a hard, though not an uncommon one: no longer able to fight the battles of his country, from age, infirmities, and wounds badly healed, he was put on the half-pay list; having an aged partner and two orphan grandchildren to maintain, he had been obliged to sell his half-pay to feed them, that could not be supported upon the small pittance of forty-two pounds a-year! Reduced to the extreme of poverty, his wife now
lay

lay dying ; and the infant legacy of a beloved son, who had expired by his side in a conflict for the liberties of Britain, were now suffering under the accumulated horrors of sickness, nakedness, and famine. The veteran's request to her Grace was for a little *immediate* succour to sustain those dear relatives.

“The third applicant was a most beautiful and fascinating young creature ; she was wrapped in a white muslin robe, which shewed to advantage her slender form. As I requested to know her cause of sorrow, she withdrew her charming face from my ardent gaze, pulled her straw bonnet over the finest pair of blue eyes I ever beheld, which were suffused with tears ; she answered me with much dignity, that her woes were of a nature that could not be disclosed to every person ; to the feeling heart and delicate commiseration of the Duchess of Flintshire, she dared only entrust them.

“Awed

“Awed by her charms, and the graceful manner in which she delivered herself, I was silent. In a few minutes the Duchess entered the audience-room, and I advanced, with a self-approving bow, to introduce her mendicant levee, by saying those were unfortunate people whom the fame of her unbounded generosity and charity had brought to lay their sorrows at her feet, in hopes of having them alleviated by the munificence of her Grace’s disposition.

“Instead of reading in her countenance those looks of approval I thought my well-studied address deserved, I was thunderstruck at beholding the angry lightning that darted from her eyes, on your devoted servant. She stood in the middle of the apartment firm and erect, looking with haughty severity and frigid coldness on the humble suppliants, while she proudly waved her hand for me to depart.

“Astonished

“Astonished at her manner, I was willing to witness the reception she gave her petitioners; therefore retired no farther than an adjoining closet, where I heard the elderly lady and the Officer repeat the story of their distresses. — As through my ignorance they had been admitted to her august presence, she was too prudent to forfeit her good name, by sending them away without listening to their complaints; when calling her usual hypocrisy to her aid, she assured them she was vastly concerned to hear of their misfortunes, but those sort of applications were so numerous, that she found her fortune very inadequate to answer the various claims upon her sensibility. She would order inquiries to be made into the truth of their stories; and, if she found their wants really such as they had described, she would do what she could for their relief.

“They

“ They retired with sighs of despair. Both the cases of those unfortunates called for instantaneous assistance—to them delay was death. I began to see through the motive of her procrastination; I much doubted if they would ever hear from her Grace more. I stepped after them, and clapped a crown into the hand of each; I heard them mutter a blessing, which I did not feel that my conduct deserved. I flew back on the wings of impatient curiosity to hear the story of the weeping beauty, by whose appearance I was so much interested.

“ Having thrown herself on her knees before the Duchess, who had seated herself on a sofa, with folded palms and streaming eyes, she thus addressed her:

“ I entreat your Grace to excuse the temerity of a misguided, wretched, forsaken female, who dares to hope you will stretch out your hand to prevent her from plunging into yet greater guilt,
to

to save from starving the innocent offspring of illicit love. To the sensibility, mercy, and philanthropy that are said to actuate the bosom of the Duchess of Flintshire, the penitent sinner dares appeal. She will feel for the unfortunate Amantha, and extend her bounty to save from future shame, or a premature death, the victim of artful duplicity and avaricious cruelty."

"Arise, and proceed in your story, young woman, without any further circumlocution," interrupted the Duchess; whose scowling brow exhibited none of those lovely traits that the charming Amantha had supposed inhabited her heart. She seemed to have lost the small portion of courage she had commenced with, depressed by the haughty and repelling glances of her stately auditor.

"Appearing still to flatter herself with receiving the relief her desperate situation demanded, however ungraciously
it

it might be conferred, she struggled with her wounded pride, and yielded to the dire necessity that compelled her to speak ; for I observed a transient blush pass over her pale cheek, and she lifted up her fine eyes as much as to say, “to what indignity have I exposed myself !” I was so lost in hearing, and gazing at this most interesting creature, I do not think a trumpet applied to my ear would have roused me. After a short pause, she, with much eloquence, thus addressed the Duchess :—

“ I cannot take the liberty of requesting your Grace to hear me repeat the whole of my sad story ; though conscious the recounting it at length can alone form some exculpation for my conduct, and palliate those errors I have been induced to commit. To excuse them *altogether*, I know, is impossible ; I will therefore lightly touch on the nefarious plots that were laid to entrap me, by those from whom I had a
right

right to expect protection. In my unfortunate case, the laws of religion, honour, and hospitality were all outraged.

“ Fearful I might not have the honour of being admitted to your presence, I devoted last night to the throwing together, on paper, the heads of my unhappy story ; I will now take the liberty of leaving it with your Grace, and if, on the perusal, it should merit your commiseration, I shall flatter myself with the hopes of hearing from you, as my urgent necessity for immediate relief will be there explained.”—She then laid a sealed packet on the table, saying it contained her direction.

“ The Duchess, who had observed her while speaking, with a scrutinizing, and I thought a malignant eye, said coolly ; when she had perused her memorial, if it was of such a nature as she thought the Duchess of Flintshire *ought* to relieve, she should hear from her.

“ Amantha,

“Amantha, curtsying respectfully, now left the room. I was so interested about this young creature, that I knew not how to act. Whether the relief she so ardently solicited was money or protection, whatever was the nature of her complaints, I feared they would not be relieved by the sympathetic charity of the Duchess Dowager of Flintshire.— Leaving my hiding place, I followed her down stairs, perceived her apply her handkerchief to her eyes, and by the time she reached the hall, she appeared quite overcome by her varied feelings. I feared she would faint; handing her a chair, I ran to my room to procure a glass of Madeira; I presented it to her with all the respect I really felt for her sex and misfortunes. After much persuasion, she was prevailed on to swallow it; she seemed renovated, and thanked me with much condescending sweetness. Emboldened by her manner, I ventured to ask—

“Madam,

“ Madam, are your woes of a nature that such a trifle as I can offer to your acceptance will afford present relief?”— She viewed me while I spoke, with a look in which gratitude, surprise, and doubt were evident.

“ I assure you I mean no offence, but to present what I am well able to spare.”—After a pause, she thanked me for my good intentions, said she should ever remember them with gratitude, but civilly declined accepting any pecuniary favour. Still supposing it was *false* pride that would not permit her to receive an obligation from a person in my *situation*, when she arose to depart, I slipped a guinea into one of her gloves as I presented them to her, and opening the door, was most anxious for her leaving the house before she discovered the imposition.

“ I hardly know to what motive to assign it, my dear Sir, but I never felt so cheerful and happy in my life as I
4 did

did that morning ; I blessed the card-money I had received the night before, that had enabled me thus to bestow my mite on the unfortunate ; for though it was a small assistance, it might empower them to rub on till something better occurred ; and, in desperate cases, to gain time is every thing, you know."

" Mr. Henry, I admire your philanthropy, and sincerely rejoice that your exalted *situation*, since you came upon the *town*, has not, by enlightening your understanding, hardened your heart against the woes of your fellow-creatures ; for I am well assured that Dame Nature formed *that* heart from her very best materials."

" I am most thankful, Sir, for your good opinion. I hope I am not quite spoiled, only a little case-hardened ; for who can touch " pitch, and not be defiled ?" At Rome we must do as the Romans do ; and when a man loses his *situation* for acting according to his conscience,

conscience, it is not miraculous that he should change his system."

"You argue closely it must be allowed, and with true worldly wisdom; but I cannot say much for the justice of your inferences. You have told your story of Amantha with such natural *naïveté*, that I feel myself greatly interested in her fate, curious to peruse her narrative, and know the nature of her sorrows."

"Just so I felt myself, 'pon honour; and as a copy of the manuscript is now in my possession, you shall assuredly be gratified by a peep at it."

"I thank you; but may I take the liberty of asking how you came to obtain what appears to me not intended for your perusal?"

"Why, by a method not quite correct, I acknowledge; but that will be explained as I proceed. As soon as Amantha had left the house, being eager to observe how the Duchess would act,
I re-

I returned to the closet of *indirect* information. I perceived her reading with much attention; when she had finished, she laid it down, exclaiming aloud—"A mighty fine, inflated, made-up story of a proud, saucy minx, and her wrongs and her sufferings. I am sure I shall not add another sixpence to the *one* she calls her last, to encourage vice, by supporting and countenancing an abandoned creature and her illegitimate offspring.—I think the brother of her paramour acted very right, to divide him from so improper a connection. An artful being, such as this girl appears, might have drawn him in to disgrace his family, and ruin himself, by marrying her. I dare say the whole story is fabricated purposely to impose upon my feelings; for she has sedulously avoided mentioning any names. As to her pretensions to delicacy, and honour, and virtue, it is most laughably ridiculous. If she really has

had an offer from a man of fortune and fashion, what should prevent her accepting it? She cannot be *worse* than she is already! I shall positively do nothing for her."

"My curiosity was raised to the utmost by this apostrophe of her Grace; I longed to see those precious documents. At this instant she quitted the room; I heard her bell ring violently, and I was summoned to her presence, when she thus addressed me:

"How, Hopeful, dared you take the liberty of introducing into my presence that set of *doubtful characters*, with whose complaints I have been pestered this whole morning?—I thought you had been cured of such inexcusable mistakes, when you were sent from Lord Fellacre's."

"I beg pardon, your Grace, but it did not appear to me a similar case. To the Viscount I introduced a *harpooner*: that was, no doubt, an unwelcome

come guest in the state of his then deranged finances; but to present to the superlatively charitable, generous, feeling Duchess of Flintshire real objects of distress, whose woes her susceptibility must commiserate, her pity alleviate, and her bounty relieve, I thought was performing a most meritorious action, one that could not fail gaining me her applause and approbation."

"For the sake of her public character she would not appear to quarrel with me for the present offence; added to this, she chose to take as a compliment my ironical answer. She therefore informed me she should, for this time, pardon my error in judgment; but, if ever I committed a mistake of the kind again, I should instantly quit her family; adding—"Though I may, and am actuated by those praiseworthy sensations you suppose, yet it is a rule with me never to see, or relieve the numerous mendicants that crowd my door,

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without

without they are recommended, as worthy my notice, by those friends on whose judgment I can depend."

"I promised in future to be more circumspect, and was then dismissed from her presence.



CHAP. VII.

"I COULD think of nothing but the unfortunate Amantha; I was dying with curiosity to see her manuscript. I had taken notice where it was deposited by the Duchess—my hopes rested on her not having locked the drawer; for as soon as she had read it, she left the room, to wreak upon me her vengeance.

"I waited

“ I waited with extreme impatience to hear her chariot drive from the door. I flew to the spot ; the key was in the secretary ; I rejoiced at finding the precious memorial ; I seized it with avidity, carried it to my own room, for I knew I was secure of her Grace’s not returning for two hours ; I sat down to devour its contents. ’Pon my soul, Sir, it made me blubber like a school-boy ; I wetted the paper with my tears, yet I had beheld the Duchess Dowager of Flintshire peruse a recital of woes that made my firm nerves shudder, and keep the colour of *her* cheek ! Oh ! how I rejoiced at my stratagem of dropping the guinea into her glove—my good genius surely put that scheme into my head, to save from destruction a persecuted, charming woman.

“ I know it was not quite correct ; but, ’pon honour, I could not help taking a copy of the affecting story, that had made so strong an impression
F 3 upon

upon my feelings, being a tolerable scribe, I soon executed my intention, and restored the original to its place, before the Dowager returned. On the next morning she sent for me to her dressing-room, and bade me leave that packet where it was directed, and come away immediately, as it required no answer.

“ I received this commission with pleasure, as I knew by the address it was for Amantha; for whom, since I had read her story, I was become highly interested. I beg, Sir, you will not suppose my conduct actuated by any improper ideas, because I express myself thus warmly; for, 'pon honour, I felt only for that unfortunate young lady the most profound respect. There was something so awful in her sorrow, if I may so express it, that drove all the bad passions from my heart: I could have gone a hundred miles, bare-foot, to have saved and protected her from insult.

“ After

“ After what I had heard the Duchess say on reading the memorial, I was well assured she had not sent her a shilling. I longed once more to see Amantha; but I knew not how to act; if she had found my trifling *douceur* in the glove, I feared from one in my *situation* she would not accept it; but when I reflected how desperate was her case at the time it was presented, I could not help entertaining a better opinion of her good sense, than to suppose she would not avail herself of the gift, and forgive the donor.

“ I, therefore resolved to make an effort once more to see and serve her. When I knocked at the door, I trembled as if I had committed a crime;—on the servant's opening it, I inquired for her mistress, saying I came from the Duchess of Flintshire; this was a passport to her presence, and I was shewn into a small neat room on the first floor.—

Amantha sat on a sofa, and held on her

lap the most angelic, lovely child I ever beheld, that appeared about four years of age, whom she was teaching to read.

“On lifting up her eyes, for I was not announced, she coloured highly. With a profound bow, I presented my credentials; on opening it, her own manuscript fell on the ground; I picked it up, and laid it upon the table before her; she perceived me not while I viewed her varying countenance, which became deadly pale as she perused the small note from the Duchess; crushing it in her hand, a glowing flush covered her face and neck, as she exclaimed—

“Unfeeling woman, hard of heart! with you the virtues of sympathy, compassion, and charity are chimeras—they cannot assimilate with such a being!—thou hast not a soul capable of relieving the woes of humanity—the god-like attribute of mercy, which makes the creature resemble his Creator, is not thine!”

“While

“While she thus apostrophised, I stood silent and confounded; she appeared unconscious of my presence; clasping her infant to her bosom, she continued—

“Send thee to the Foundling!—Go myself to the Magdalen!—Insulting woman! never, never will I forsake thee, my child. I will labour for thee, beg for thee, starve with thee, die with thee, do every thing but part with thee—nothing this side eternity shall tear thee from the circling arms of thy wretched mother!”

“Here the agony of her sensations appeared to subside, by the caresses of her innocent prattler, whose lovely face she bathed with tears, which the sweet girl wiped off with her frock; and, as she clung round the neck of her parent, looking at me with affright, said—

“Go away, you naughty man, that are come to kill my dear mama with crying!”

but this address aroused Amanda, who now seemed, for the first time, to recollect a third person had been present at this humiliating scene; but when her eyes met mine, and she saw them filled with tears, she thus spoke:—

“Good young man, you have witnessed the ebullitions of my wounded feelings, that my sufferings, irritated by overweening power and ungracious insult, have forced from my bursting heart.—But it is no matter; I am convinced you cannot make an improper use of what you have heard. I am happy to see, and thank you for the relief your generous pity afforded, and the delicate method you employed to serve me, when *false* pride bade me reject your assistance.

“Know then, for to a nature noble as your’s it will afford unalloyed pleasure, that your present (which I found not till I returned here, having in my state of distraction carried my glove in

my hand) has saved the life of myself and this innocent creature, perhaps the soul of *one*, for I had dared to meditate self-destruction. I murmured against the inflictions of the Almighty—I said, “I am forsaken, wronged, and abandoned by my fellow-creatures. In this great city, where thousands are squandered in the luxuries of life, to pamper the vitiated appetites of its inhabitants, I and my infant are left to perish for want of the mere means of existence—refused even the crumbs that fall from the rich man’s table !”

“While thus I had the temerity to repine, to doubt the justice of my Maker, to arraign the humanity of my species, to absolve hope, to nurture black despair, Emma, who had been playing with my gloves, produced a guinea, calling on me to look at the pretty pocket-piece. Astonished and confounded, I viewed this phenomenon ; at length my suspicion fell on you ; I recollected

your modest offers of assistance, and my proud rejection, for such I confess it was; because you was a dependant, I could not bear to owe you an obligation, though I meanly solicited the bounty of the unfeeling Duchess of Flintshire!

“ I felt ashamed of my folly; I blushed, deeply humiliated, at my ungrateful conduct to you, and resolved to accept the offering of commiseration from the bosom of sympathy. I viewed, as the presage of changing fortune, the occurrences of that day, convinced that God, having purified my heart in the school of affliction, was about restoring the sorrowing penitent to his favour. I knelt and implored his pardon for my murmuring and despair, at the instant he had raised me a friend to snatch me from perdition. I solemnly vowed to despond no more, but bear, with the fortitude becoming a Christian, the woes I yet might be fated to endure,

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“ I arose from my knees, with my turbid passions tranquillized, my mind softened by the vow I had made; *hope* again revisited the bosom it had so long deserted. I was in this happy temperature when this paper (holding out her Grace's note) tore open my scarce skinned wounds, and, by the unwomanly offers it contains, renewed all my former agonizing pangs.—Read it, Sir, you have a right to my confidence; I hope its contents will palliate, if not wholly excuse, the frenzical behaviour it occasioned.”

“ As it strongly impressed my mind, I think I can pretty correctly recite its contents. They were to this effect:—

“ The Duchess Dowager of Flintshire returns the memorial of Amantha, which, she must observe, has but little appearance of being founded on facts to recommend it to her notice, not one of

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the persons' names alluded to being mentioned, by which its validity might be ascertained; but that is of no consequence to the Duchess of Flintshire, as she should never think of robbing the chaste wife, or virtuous maiden, of any part of that sum, by her appropriated to *their* sole use, to countenance and support a wilfully abandoned woman, and the offspring of an illicit connection! All the Duchess of Flintshire can think of doing in Amantha's case is, being a supporter of those charities, to get her child received into the Foundling, and herself given an opportunity of repentance and amendment, by being placed in the Magdalen Hospital; from whence, after her time of probation, she might, if she acted properly, be enabled to gain her living by honest servitude."

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"Pon honour, Sir, I blushed for the meanness of this Dowager Duchess's
avarice

avarice and cruelty. I returned the note with a respectful bow, and assured Amantha that no action of my life had ever given me so much real pleasure as having served her; that I hoped she would continue me the gratification of being her banker, till she heard from her friends, or was otherwise provided for; when she might repay me with interest, if she would not condescend to owe a favour to an humble donor. I assured her I could not be hurt by the offer I made, having a very handsome remuneration for my *situation* in the family of this flinty Duchess.

I then laid my purse upon the table, into which I had previously put five guineas; I entreated her to make use of its contents; and, if she would in future command my services, I should be highly flattered by the honour. She turned upon me her humid eyes, with a look of such expression that I shall never forget; they beamed refulgent with

with surprise, piety, and gratitude, as she replied—

“No, Sir, I cannot take this money now, because, for a little longer, I can do without it; but be assured I do not refuse your generous offer from any reluctance to owe another favour to one whom I shall ever glory, whatever may be my future fate in life, to confess those obligations I have already received. My gratitude will only end with that existence which your well-timed bounty has prolonged.”

“I dared not further urge this noble-minded woman, but with sincere regret replaced the purse in my pocket, took a respectful leave of Amantha and her beloved little cherub, fully resolved to be a spy on her actions, and relieve her wants, in despite of herself.”

“I am so interested, Mr. Henry, about your fair favourite, that I must entreat a sight of her memorial. I hope this is not an indecorous request, as you

have observed that it contains no *names* that can lead to a discovery of the parties concerned, was I, by an improper curiosity, to attempt developing the mystery over which her delicacy has drawn a veil."

"Well, Sir, you shall see it; because it goes nearly to exculpate her, and throw the odium on those to whom it alone belongs. But you must promise that, when perused, you will return it; for I would not part with this faithful transcript of the wrongs of Amantha, for any sum you could offer, though I begin to know the value of money, as you have witnessed," he added, smiling significantly.

"I gave him a sacred assurance of returning his highly valued manuscript, and it was most certainly my intention; but my hasty voyage precluded me from keeping my word, and being in my waistcoat-pocket when I was hurried on board, it is now safe in

my

my possession. Should I ever live to return to Britain, and can find out this worthy fellow, I will certainly restore it to him. This is the account he gives of himself:—

“His father had been a parish-clerk, in one of the northern counties of England; and he had received a good classical education through the Curate's friendship, who thought him a young man of some promise, and that, by cultivating his talents, he might be preserved from the drudgery of manual labour. His parents dying, he speeded to the great city, to make his fortune, hoping to gain employment as tutor in an academy, or as amanuensis to some great man.

“This did not exactly happen.—Having no interest, and the very little money he brought with him being exhausted, forlorn and desponding, he met with a young fellow who had been his townsman, and was now a double to
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the gentleman of a Nobleman of high rank. He spoke in raptures of his honourable, lucrative, and indolent situation, warmly recommended the party-coloured profession to his friend, offering to procure him an establishment directly, saying there was no doubt, if he minded his hits, such a fine, well-grown, handsome fellow, might soon make his fortune, between the kindnesses of wives, dowagers, and spinsters.

“ This flattering proposal was not to be rejected by a young man of twenty, with all his passions and appetites in their full force, and no other means appearing of gratifying them. Thus, to use his own favourite phrase, he entered upon the *town*, and accepted a *situation* with Viscount Fellacre.

“ When I met him at my sister's, he had been five years on the *town*, in which period he had met with numerous *situations*, good, bad, and indifferent. He had from Nature received a susceptible

ceptible heart, and a good understanding. From the worthy Curate's instructions he had imbibed the principles of religion and honesty; but having the misfortune to be early thrown into the houses of the dissipated great, he acquired many of their follies, and was become a servile imitator of their vices. His charity, faith, and honesty sunk under the force of ridicule from his equals, and the bad example of his superiors. From his associates in office he learned to be avaricious; by the flattery of women, he was taught to be vain of his personal qualifications; this engendered conceit, which produced that unnatural monster, Affectation!

CHAP. VIII.

"I INQUIRED if he ever again saw Amantha, and if he could tell what was now become of her.

"Most certainly, Sir, I did ; I could not have rested if I had left her in the distress I was well assured, from her manuscript, she must be in. I felt for the delicacy of her situation, and the mortification it must be to a woman of her spirit, to accept the means of existence from one who was himself depending upon others. I therefore thought of a hundred contrivances to supply her wants in a way that she should not mistrust me as her benefactor.

At

At length I fell upon one I thought would succeed.

“I wrote an anonymous letter, as from a lady of fashion, saying that her case had been mentioned by the Duchess of Flintshire, that she commiserated her misfortunes, and requested she would accept the enclosed trifle, which would be sent in a blank cover, every Monday morning, till she should cause to be inserted an advertisement in the Morning Herald, saying that Amantha no longer could be benefited by the assistance of Z. Z.—In this I enclosed a half-guinea; I would have made it a whole one, but I feared in that case she would not have accepted the donation.

“I am certain she suspected me as the author of this deception. She sent for, and questioned me on the subject; but I most decidedly and positively denied knowing any thing of the circumstance to which she alluded. This precluded her from returning the paltry
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sum, and I was made happy, because, though it was not much, it kept off actual want. I am sure Heaven blessed the gift, for I never missed it; nor should I have grudged the donation, had it been continued for a whole year. At the end of two months I read this advertisement :

“Amantha, her heart overflowing with gratitude, acquaints her anonymous benefactor, Z. Z. that she has no longer any occasion to receive her bounty, having, through the support it afforded her, been enabled to conduct herself with that propriety, which has occasioned her to receive an ample reward for all her sufferings.”

“I was in the country. I flew, on my return to town, to the lodgings lately occupied by Amantha, and was informed

informed by the mistress of the house, that she had discharged and quitted them, six weeks before. I could gain no other information; to this woman she had always been known by a fictitious name, and as a young widow; and of course, whatever was her present situation, she chose to leave those apartments under her assumed character.

“ I was quite miserable at not being able to discover how she was disposed of; in a few days I was gratified, being honoured with a most charming letter from her, acquainting me that a gentleman, who had long pursued her with illicit views, convinced of her honour, rectitude of conduct, and goodness of heart, by her persevering endurance of all the horrors of poverty, rather than listen to those offers of opulence that were to sink her yet *lower* in her own estimation, had proffered, with unparalleled generosity, to reward her long-tried sufferings,

sufferings, by making her his wife, and to become a father to her child. She had accepted his hand, who was affectionate, generous, and good; feeling for him the utmost gratitude, and highest esteem for his many estimable qualities, particularly for his tender and paternal attention to her beloved Emma, who was proud of, and happy with her dear new papa; it being her husband's wish that the former part of her wrongs and sufferings should be buried in oblivion. To do this effectually, they were then preparing to leave England for a few years.

“ At her return, she should be truly rejoiced to have an opportunity of shewing her high sense of the obligations I had conferred upon her; acknowledged that she was not deceived by the signature of Z. Z. well knowing to whose friendly and unprecedented commiseration she was indebted for the existence of herself and her beloved infant, and

who she felt was ultimately the cause of her present happiness.

“ In the packet was inclosed a twenty pound Bank bill, thus returning to me the principal and *cent. per cent.* interest for the money I had advanced. This mortified my pride, because it robbed me of the pleasure I felt in bestowing it. I still, however, comforted myself with the idea that I had been the humble means of so much virtue being rewarded ; for Amantha was virtuous in the *real* sense of the word, notwithstanding her early misfortune, and I am convinced you will be of my opinion when you have perused her story.”

“ It must indeed, Mr. Henry, give you infinite satisfaction to reflect on so praiseworthy an action, the performance of which I could envy you ; for the man who has done *one* such in the course of his life, might plead it in extenuation for a thousand peccadilloes,
and

and claim a pardon for all his youthful errors and follies."

"I am very glad, my dear Sir, you think so, for if announced to them, it would have appeared in a quite different point of view to my high and mighty protectors; my avowed partiality for, and wish to serve what they denominated *doubtful characters*, if I had not amended, by their example, the folly of my ways, I should have soon been shewn the outside of their doors, as a fellow who had the insolent assumption to suppose himself more just, generous, charitable, and sensible than his superiors.

"These are faults of a heinous nature; the reality, or even appearance of which, are never in an inferior to be forgiven. They had occasioned me to be looked on in a very unfavourable point of view by the Duchess Dowager of Flintshire, ever since the morning I have described, when I introduced to her the mendicant levee. Nothing

retained me in my *situation* about her person, but my having a tolerable figure that measured nearly six feet ; but even this indispensable recommendation to her favour did not avail me, when, in an unfortunate moment, I received from the hands of a venerable looking Clergyman, and presented to her, as I thought, a letter, but it happened to inclose proposals for a subscription to two octavo volumes of sermons, which he begged the honour of dedicating to her Grace. As this was delivered into her hands, she was obliged to set her name to the list. This second fault, as she had threatened, occasioned me to receive my *congé*.

“ The Dowager, in a rage, ordered her *fac-totum*, and my avowed enemy, Mr. Snarl, the steward, to discharge my demands, which he did immediately, informing me in most courtly language that my future services would be dispensed with by her Grace.

“ Knowing

“Knowing her character, I was neither surprised nor grieved at this event; for nothing but my interest, which I was just beginning to understand, could have retained me a week in a family, whose mistress I thoroughly despised for her hypocrisy, avarice, meanness, and hardness of heart.”

“Give me leave to interrupt your narrative, by inquiring what you meant by the assertion, that the Duchess retained you for your personal qualities; for of what consequence could it be to her, if you were attentive, civil, intelligent, and useful, whether you were tall or short, brown or fair, ugly or handsome?”

“Oh! a great deal; three parts of the *situations* I have filled since I came upon the *town*, would never have been mine, had I been a little, short, clumsy, ill-favoured fellow. The great world, my good Sir, are guided by appearances; to this they sacrifice ease, pleasure, and
G 3 fortune;

fortune ; even their vassals must contribute to add by their exterior, to the splendour of their well-appointed *mélange*. There's the Earl of Dapperwit, who is the exact prototype of a ninepin, has a measure placed in his hall, and his attendants must attain what he deems the unique standard ; or, whatever their merits or talents for the offices they wish to serve, they will meet a positive rejection from his tiny Lordship !

“ I am well assured my shewy figure retained me as an appendage to the Duchess, to gratify her vanity, and prevent my coming into the possession of her very dear friend, Lady Harriet Hellebore, whom she mortally hated, and who had long cast an eye of desire upon your humble servant ; for though she kept only a sedan-chair, the mortal selected to perambulate before it, must be quite *comme il faut*. She could not abate one inch of six feet in his height.

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I was just the criterion in both respects, therefore suited her Ladyship's taste; she always requested if, at any time, her Grace chose to part with me, she might have the refusal of so delectable an attendant !

“ After having made my bow to her Grace of Flintshire, I paid my *devoirs* at the *ruelle* of Lady Harriet Hellebore, who was an upright spinster of sixty. My demands were high, as a remuneration of my services, for I foresaw hard duty, from her caprice and ill-temper; but to satisfy her own vanity, and vex and mortify her bosom-friend, the dear Dowager Duchess, she complied with them without a single murmur, and I was instituted into my new office, with all the perquisites and immunities thereunto belonging, with only this drawback, that it was expected I should farm all the expences attending her weekly parties, and more splendid routs, out of the card-money I should

G 4

receive ;

receive; that is, I was to find wax-lights, refreshments, &c. &c.”

“Stop, stop, Mr. Henry, you are certainly running into the regions of romance; it is impossible for me to suppose that a woman of birth, consequence, and fortune, could descend to such meanness, or commit herself, by so degrading a conduct, to the just sarcasms of a discarded domestic.”

“Sir, I excuse your scepticism, arising from that lack of worldly knowledge I have perceived by all your questions, since I have had the honour of conversing with you. But rest assured that mine is a simple recital of a mere matter of fact, well known as a common practice in the fashionable world. It would not be possible, without this sort of management, to aid their establishment, and prop their consequence, for widows with *mediocre* jointures, and maiden ladies, of high birth and small fortunes, to mix in that society, and
partake

partake in those frivolous amusements, for which alone they are fitted by mind, education, and taste.

“ You may therefore believe me when I assert, ’pon honour, that Lady Harriet Hellebore was not at all singular in this arrangement ; for though indecorous, it was by no means uncommon, being justified by the usages of her numerous quality friends ! If this littletonish *peccadillo* disgusts you, what will you say, when informed that the Countess of Blubber, bearded like a pard, her head covered with the snows of sixty winters, ornamented, like an ox for the sacrifice, with wreaths of never-fading roses, lends her name and house to a *Croupier*, to establish a Faro Bank, to initiate into the arcana of gaming the young and unwary of both sexes ; at whose orgies this antiquated Sybil presides, and condescends to receive a premium of fifty guineas a night, for these nefarious transactions !

“ Don't shake your head, my dear Sir ; these are incontrovertible *truisms*, well known to the public, which are imitated and followed by her equally notorious and less exalted acquaintance, Mrs. Shuffle, Mrs. Strombolo, Miss Tripwell, and half a thousand *et ceteras* of less consequence, but equally blameable ; over whose proceedings the eagle of the law has long hovered with expanded wings, and will one day pounce upon his devoted victims !

“ When I entered upon my *situation* in the family of Lady Harriet, she ordered me, on pain of her everlasting displeasure, not to admit to her presence *doubtful characters*. I was at a loss to guess to whom the spinster affixed that epithet, that had already been so dangerous to my interest. She was too prudent to fear *harpooners* ; her propensity to griping, avaricious penury, was too well known for her to be troubled with mendicant petitioners ; she felt no

compunctious visitings in her steel-environed bosom for the woes of mortality ; nor had she any ambition to be supposed an alms-giver, a patroness of mental excellence, or a charitable contributor to relieve the bodily infirmities of her species."

" Here surely, according to your description of Lady Harriet, you were not likely to commit an error of judgment, by introducing improper guests."

" Alas ! Sir, you are *once* more mistaken ; for I again became the victim of my ignorance, in not being able to decipher the various passions and propensities that actuated the hearts of those personages to whom it was my unfortunate fate to be annexed.

" When I had resided about half a year with Lady Harriet, one morning, in passing through the hall, it was my ill luck to open the door to a lady and three lovely children. They had the appearance of what, by gentlemen in
G 6 my

my *situation*, is called shabby genteel. In the face of the mother, for so I supposed her to be, were the visible remains of beauty ; but care and sorrow had traced strong lines, that shadowed it with the appearance of premature old age.

“ With a look of mild grief, which I could never reject, she inquired for Lady Harriet Hellebore, entreating to be admitted to her immediately. I asked whom I should announce ?—She said, “ No matter, young man, for my name ; it will not be a passport to her Ladyship.”—I was doubtful how to act, but Lady Harriet having, at breakfast, given no orders for not being at home, I ushered in, *sans ceremonie*, this interesting group. The contracted brow, the stare of astonishment, the annihilating frown, the appalling expletives of, “ How dare you force yourself into my presence ?—Which of my people had the presumption to let you in ?”

in?"—this, pronounced in a voice of thunder, soon convinced me of the error I had unwittingly committed, when hastily shutting the door, I descended with the utmost precipitation.

“In my retreat from the field of action, I encountered her Ladyship's pretty Abigail, of whom I demanded a reason for the storm that we both heard raging in the spinster's dressing-room with unremitting fury. She, who felt rather a predilection in my favour, informed me that she was fearful, by my inattention, I had ruined myself with her lady; who had solemnly vowed that the person who had the hardihood to admit Lady Charlotte Colvil, or any of her brats, into the house, should quit it immediately, whatever might have been their past pretensions to her favour.

“Amazed at so unrelenting a determination, I desired to be acquainted with the cause for such vindictive violence,

lence, and found that the culprit whom I had introduced, was a younger sister of Lady Harriet's, by a second wife of the Earl's, whose mother had died in giving her birth. Lady Charlotte had always been looked on with jealousy by her sister, from the evident partiality of her father, and with envy for her superior personal accomplishments. When she was eighteen, Lady Charlotte conceived a *tendresse* for a soldier of fortune, who was beating-up for recruits in the vicinity of their country residence. He thought it a fine thing to marry the daughter of an Earl; but, as hopes of his consent were out of the question, they decamped for Scotland. Lady Harriet, rumour whispered, had herself cast the eye of affection on the Captain; to this he was no stranger, but improvidently preferred the blooming charms that animated the face of Lady Charlotte, to her maturer rigidity of countenance.

“ The

“ The consequences that followed this selected preference, were everduring persecution and everlasting hatred.— She effectually precluded them from the Earl’s sight, whose anger she promoted, whose acerbity she encouraged with all the virulence of determined malice. None of their letters of contrition, and prayers for forgiveness, ever reached him, she always sending them back unopened. Thus the father being taught to believe, from their silence, that having set his power at defiance, they were above condescending to sue for his mercy, was persuaded, by the artful Lady Harriet, to abandon them to their own devices, and to make a will, bequeathing to her all his personal fortune. This was hardly executed before he expired suddenly, in an apoplectic fit, occasioned, as the physicians said, by the agitation of his mind, for the supposed ingratitude of his favourite child.

“ Captain

“ Captain Colvil only received five thousand pounds, the portion of his wife’s mother, that had been settled on her daughter. This was soon dissipated by the improvident young couple, and she had worn out existence, doomed to experience the cold neglect and bitter reflections of a husband, whose pure love, long since evaporated, had left him nothing but the dregs of repentance for having married a quality wife, and entailed poverty on his children. These retrospections engendered disgust, produced mutual recriminations, which ended in unavailing regret !

“ Lady Charlotte had made frequent attempts, both by letters and personal visits, to move the frigid heart of her sister in her favour ; but to the first she was inexorable, and inaccessible to the latter. These were circumstances well known to all the family, though to me a secret. “ A favourite has no friends,” and wishing me to fall into the snare, they had permitted me to accelerate my fate,

fate, by presenting to her Ladyship the proscribed object that was so detestable to her vision.

“ Though Lady Charlotte had been so often repulsed, rendered desperate by her present circumstances, she determined to make one more attempt, and try if the sight of her three charming children would not thaw the isicles that environed the heart of this ferocious votary of chastity ; for their father had, that morning, been arrested, and there was an execution in the house, which, if not taken out by their aunt, would rob them of a bed to rest their innocent heads upon.

“ I sincerely pitied the woes of this unfortunate lady, who was driven with ignominy, insult, and even execrations, from the house and the bosom that ought to have afforded shelter and protection to herself and infants. Her's was a case beyond my power to relieve ; and experience had taught me, that if I indulged

indulged the philanthropy of my disposition, I should never find a resting place for the sole of my foot. For me, who was to live by the great, to set up for a reformer of their minds and manners, was absurd; and, by my actions, to reflect on their conduct, making their derelictions from justice more flagrant, I clearly perceived was not the way to gain myself friends among my superiors, or establish myself long enough in any *situation*, however lucrative, to acquire that independence for which I so ardently sighed.

“ It was a long time before I could bring myself to allow my ardent mind to be restricted by prudence. Hard were the struggles I had to sustain between my natural propensities, and that behaviour I found it necessary to adopt. In despite of interest, habit, and example, there are times, seasons, and occasions, when I am tempted to throw off the leaven of worldly wisdom, and revel
in

in the joys of serving my fellow-creatures, without either fee or reward, but the superlative pleasure of performing a good action.

“No sooner had the unfortunate Lady Charlotte Colvil received her final dismissal from her incensed, unfeeling, inexorable sister, than Lady Harriet sending for me, exhausted all the acrimony of her breast, that she had not vented on her anathematized relative; and I was ordered, for daring to disobey her positive commands (of whose nature I had been wholly ignorant), to quit her presence and house immediately.

“Irritated by reproofs that I thought unjust, I could not help answering her with ironical acerbity, that I begged leave to recommend to her Ladyship, when next she chose a person to supply my place, that she would not merely attend to the dimensions of his person, but endeavour to fathom the principles of his heart; or she might again happen to
meet

meet with a man that was not proof against the sympathies of humanity, whose bosom was not steeled against the entreaties of a sorrowing sister and her innocent progeny, to be admitted to the presence of a relation, who ought to receive, commiserate, and serve them.

“ She would not have permitted me to finish my philippic, had not the violence of her passion precluded speech ; when she recovered utterance, her abuse burst forth in a torrent ; like the suppressed lava of a volcano, it bore down all before it, at what she called my unexampled insolence. If I had not made a hasty retreat, I really believe this enraged Tysiphone would have let me feel the full weight of her brawny arm and well-sharpened talons.



CHAP. IX.

“I DECAMPED instantaneously, and had now to seek another *situation*.— Though poor in pelf, I was much enriched with worldly knowledge; for without that, if you mean to mix with society, all other learning is vain and useless—indeed rather an impediment than an assistance towards obtaining honours, preferments, and riches; but conjunctively possessed, they help a man to ascend the ladder of ambition with amazing velocity. The last four years of my life, I have had numerous opportunities of improvement, and have
sedulously

sedulously applied myself to the study of men and manners ; and being rather of a sanguine disposition, I contrive to gild my prospects with hope, and flatter myself I may one day be enabled to turn my natural and acquired talents to advantage."

" Finding he had brought his promised communications to a conclusion, I thanked him for the trouble he had so obligingly given himself, by repeating the history of his adventures for my edification, from which, I assured him, with much truth, I derived both instruction and amusement, and they had ultimately taught me a lesson, whose usefulness I should not easily forget ; that he had, with much perspicuity in his recital, delineated who were those proscribed beings that were excluded the houses of the great and opulent, under the description of *doubtful characters*.

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“ I attempted to make him a present, more worthy the acceptance of a scholar and a genius, than I had thought necessary to offer him under the semblance of the party-coloured brethren. He appeared hurt and mortified, rejecting it with much politeness, saying—

“ No, Sir, excuse me; I took your money at first, because I have long taught myself to look on those *douceurs* as the perquisites of office, and can pocket a bribe with as much *sang-froid* as my betters; but I am not yet arrived at consequence enough in the world to be paid for the exertion of my oratorical powers !”

“ Obligated to replace my purse in my pocket, I was just going to inquire how long he had been an inmate of Mrs. Raby’s family, when a bell ringing, he was compelled to leave me. I looked at my watch, and found to my astonishment, so interested I had been in the various anecdotes related by this
scientific

scientific footman, that time had slid imperceptibly away, for I had been in Harley Street three hours, it being then nine o'clock.

“On Henry’s return to the parlour, he informed me that he was vastly sorry if my business with Mrs. Raby was particularly momentous, because he feared it would be impossible for me to see her that night, as he found, since we had been conversing, his Lordship was arrived, and meant to accompany her to the Opera; that he should most assuredly receive his *congé* if he admitted me in opposition to a positive command? ~~not that~~ he should value the loss of his present situation, which was not at all to his *gout*; for the lady was proud, insolent, and passionate, exacting more respect from having forfeited every claim to any. That it was the first time he had ever lived with a *fille entretenue*, nor should he now, but to oblige her lordly protector,

lector, who had promised to reward his services with a snug sinecure place.

“ I sighed at honest Henry’s comments, and was vexed and mortified at my disappointment; but could not think of forcing myself into her presence, when by such a conduct I should have essentially injured this young man, for whose fate I felt much interested from the recital of his history, which evidently portrayed a goodness of heart, that could not be destroyed even by the depravity of corrupt example. I therefore told him I would not, though it was my ardent wish, intrude my company upon his lady that night, but return the next morning, as I perceived such a conduct would be detrimental to his future prospects, and I thought it would be a very ungrateful return for his confidence and attention.

“ I took my leave, and he delivered into my hands the memorial of Amantha,

accompanied with innumerable charges to take particular care of it, keep its contents a profound secret, and return it to him in safety. Having pledged my honour to most punctually observe all his requests, he waited upon me to the door, assuring me I should be introduced to Mrs. Raby at my next visit. I desired he would not mention to her my having called, nor by any means describe my person.

“ I believe he thought me an injured and discarded lover ; but though I appeared to him in such a questionable shape, and he was so open, undisguised, and unbounded in his confidence to me, he never made any attempt, directly or indirectly, to urge me to a disclosure of my affairs, or to satisfy the curiosity which the distraction of my air, and oddity of my behaviour must naturally have excited, for which I gave much credit to his discretion and urbanity of manners.

“ When

“ When I found myself in the street, I had thoughts of returning to the hotel, where I had been set down, and amusing my mind from a retrospection of my own sorrows, by a perusal of those of the interesting Amantha. At that instant an elegant chariot drove by me, in which, by the light of its lamps, I recognized my undone sister, ornamented in the height of fashion, and glittering with diamonds. She was accompanied by her lordly seducer. They appeared high in mirth; Laurina’s laugh of inconsiderate levity broke upon the stillness of the air, it struck upon my heart, and aroused the horrid phantoms of my past misery; then quickly rushed through my heated brain all those deadly evils her ambitious vices had occasioned, and wrung my agonized bosom with indescribable torments. My soul sickened at her sight; I beheld her alone as a parricide, who had murdered her only surviving parent. To my mental vision

he again appeared, as when employing his last moments in praying for the reformation of this ungrateful child, and recommending to me to use my endeavours to reclaim and receive the fair penitent to my fraternal protection.

“ Absorbed by these painful ideas, at the contumacy of an only and beloved sister, I wandered, unconscious of my road, or of the passing crowd, till I was aroused by the cries of a female, to take care, or I should be rode over. I started from my reverie, and beheld myself crossing at the top of the Haymarket, among a press of coaches, that had been conveying the sons and daughters of Dissipation, the gay votaries of Folly, to the favourite temple of the goddess of their idolatry.

“ Perceiving myself at the door of the Opera House, I resolved to enter, and be an unexpected spectator of Laurina's actions and behaviour ; by which I should be enabled to form some conjecture

conjecture of the success that would attend my mission. Henry had informed me on which side of the house her box was situated; I therefore placed myself in a corner of the gallery directly opposite, which gave me a full view of Laurina, and I could make my observations on her conduct unperceived.

“The hated author of her dereliction from virtue remained not long with her, and I believe he quitted the house, his place being soon supplied by a succession of fashionable young men; some I had known at College, and many others, with whose faces I was well acquainted; among the rest was my arch-enemy, the detestable Lord Burford. She seemed perfectly at her ease, and looked around with inflated vanity, as glorying in their adulation, and the apparent admiration she excited.

“To what passed on the stage I was totally a stranger, my whole attention was devoted to Laurina; but what gave

me the bitterest pang, because it proved her lost to all sense of shame, and of course perfectly irreclaimable, was, when I beheld mine, and her early companion, Sir Thomas Lurcher, seat himself behind her, lolling over the back of her chair, with all the easy familiarity of one assured that his company was not displeasing; while she talked much, and laughed loud at his conversation, tapped him with her fan to call his attention, sent him to order a cup of tea, and in short played off all the airs and graces of an unblushing finished coquette, resolved on universal domination.

“While my bosom was torn with anguish, and my limbs trembled with contending passions at the degrading scene I forced myself to witness, that was acting by this unhappy girl, whose mind I much doubted was too far degenerated to listen to any thing I could urge, to induce her to abandon a way of

of

of life she had herself embraced, and which appeared to yield her pleasure, unalloyed by remorse ; my train of ideas was broke by the conversation of a couple of buckish-looking young men, who appeared to be of the better order of tradesmen. One of them addressed his companion, saying—

“ D——e, Will, only look what a dash the Parson’s daughter makes. She now calls herself Mrs. Raby, but I remember her well enough when she lived with Lady Lurcher ; for we did business for the Baronet’s family. Her antiquated admirer seems to have done the thing genteelly ; but it won’t last : he soon tires of his mistresses, throws them off without any provision, and then they are glad to come down to us, my boy, whom they call the *Bourgeois*.”

“ His friend replied—“ Upon my soul, she’s a nice tit-bit, this same Miss Carter, *alias* Raby ; but I can’t suppose

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she

she will come upon the *paré* yet, for I find she is just now quite the rage; and, if she knows how to play her cards cunningly, before a new face starts for the plate, she may command her own terms."

"Oh! let her alone for that, she's as deep as mud. Don't you see how she is flirting with the young Baronet; when once she has hooked him, I'll warrant she lands the trout safely. I'll bet you guineas to shillings that she is preparing against contingencies, and means to practise the old courtier's arts upon himself; when she perceives he is going to serve her one of his slippery tricks, she will save her pride the mortification, by getting the whip-hand, and giving him the go-by."

"That is, you suppose, like a wary General, or a sinking politician, she will decamp or resign, when she finds the post no longer tenable!"

"Just

“ Just so, my knowing one ; to shew her gratitude, and repay the obligations she owes the parents, for having taken her from poverty, educated her with their own children, and brought her up as a fine lady, she will assist the son to dissipate the estate of his ancestors.”

“ On hearing this dialogue, I know not what name to give to the sensations it excited : I felt it had opened upon me a new source of misery, for which I was totally unprepared. There was distraction in the very thought ;—my sister become the mistress of Sir Thomas Lurcher—I vowed that *never* should be. I felt for the grief it would occasion my kind Edward—it was fraught with destruction to my own hopes ; for, if such were the intended arrangements of Laura, could I ever flatter myself with the most distant prospect of receiving the hand of my beloved Florentina ?

“ While thus lost in a profundity of terrifying ideas, these young men, whose

conversation had given a fresh wound to my breast, were departed; for which I have since rejoiced, or in the furor of the moment, I fear I should have been tempted to expose myself, by chastising their insolent freedom of speech, forgetting that any woman, however high her consequence and rank, who commits her character to public animadversion, must expect to pay the price of her temerity, equally with the lowest.

“ My passions were wrought up by what I had recently heard, to that extreme tension, that I could not endure to procrastinate my visit to Laurina till the morrow, resolving that very night to come to an explanation with my sister, that I might either receive her to, or throw her for ever from my bosom. Perceiving her leave the box, handed by Sir Thomas, I precipitately quitted the house, and rather flew than ran, till I found myself on the outside of her door in Harley Street, at which I arrived
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some time before the chariot, and was ready, when the step was let down, to offer her my hand.



CHAP. X.

“THE look of petrified astonishment with which she gazed upon me, is better to be conceived than I can describe it: she was too much frightened to oppose my entrance, and I led her up the geometrical staircase, preceded by Henry, who appeared evidently surprised; he threw open the folding-doors, and ushered us into a drawing-room blazing with wax-lights from a brilliant chandelier, that was suspended by gilt chains from the centre.

For the Tournament this *suite* of apartments the various kingdoms of the earth had lent their aid; they exhibited a luxurious prototype of an Asiatic seraglio: the production of Persia's looms covered the floors, while England produced the hangings, curtains, sofas, and conversation-stools, executed in the highest taste: their composition a lemon coloured satin, trimmed with a border embroidered with bouquets of Arabian jessamine, convolvulis, and tuberoses. The boudoir, into which I followed her, was lined with superb French mirrors, that reached from the cornice to the floor, and reflected in every direction the graceful form of its frail mistress! The ceiling was painted by the elegant, creative, and scientific pencil of Angelica Kauffman: it represented the triumph of Beauty over Wisdom, from the story of the Judgment of Paris; the component parts were groups of laughing

ing playful Cupids, sporting in varied attitudes and frolic gambols!

“As I glanced my eyes around this enchanting palace, and they fell on the beautiful Armida, to whose gratification it was dedicated, my expectation of moving her to relinquish those vanities, for whose enjoyment she had sacrificed parents, honour, fame, and virtue, reckless of public opinion or private execration, was hopeless; having promised a dying father, I resolved to make an effort to snatch her from further ignominy. My heart was hardened against her, by the behaviour I had that night witnessed; I therefore felt no compunctious delicacy in coming direct to the subject of her avowed contumacy, and the occasion of my evidently unwelcome visit.

“On entering the boudoir, she had thrown herself on a *duchesse*, and contrived to retain Henry in the room, by frivolous questions and contradictory orders

orders, that she gave and countermanded in a breath ; this presented me an opportunity of viewing the Circean grotto. When she could devise no longer any feasible excuse to retain her attendant, he departed, glancing at me looks of ardent curiosity and evident astonishment. No sooner had he closed the door, than snatching her hand, I led her to a looking-glass, saying—

“ Behold, Laurina, the contrast of our appearance : children of the same parents, one mother bore us, one bosom nurtured us. These dear relatives are now no more !—yet your heart is jocund, your face dressed in the smiles of hilarity, your dress partakes of the rainbow’s hue, and your person sparkles with the diamonds of Golconda ; while mine is wasted by pining care for their irreparable loss, and my habiliments sable colour typify the sorrows of my heart. Lost, unhappy Laurina, how different

different are our ideas, sensations, and pursuits !”

“ Different indeed,” she exclaimed, with a loud laugh, “ I never saw such a woe-begone mortal since I was created. You are the very exact resemblance of the spiritual Quixote ;—pray when do you intend to begin your wandering mission ?—I could have dispensed with your visit.—What must my domestics think such an uncouth looking being could want with me ?”

“ Silence, woman !” I announced in a voice that made her tremble ; “ I will not be interrupted, nor turned from my purpose, by your insignificant attempts at wit.”—I then recounted, in the most impressive language I was master of, the death of our worthy father, hastened by her shameless desertion to his grave ; his prayers for her reformation ; the promise he had extracted from me, that I would make an effort to recal her from her past folly, to forgive, and receive

receive her to my embraces, if I could prevail upon her to quit a life, at once so disgraceful to herself, and all those connected with her by the ties of affection, friendship, or consanguinity.

“ Having most impatiently heard me to an end, she said—

“ Now, Sir, attend to my answer ;— on you I lay the whole fault, if it is one, of my present conduct ; through your improper vanity, in wishing to become the lover of your patron’s daughter, I, that was innocent, was made the sacrifice, and driven ignominiously from that roof which had hitherto protected me ; all my fair prospects blighted of marrying in the sphere for which I had been educated, and condemned to vegetate at Hartlebury Parsonage.

“ I could not expect any man of consequence would follow me to the confines of Devonshire, to make me his wife ; while I glittered in their view a fashionable toast, the admired *élève* of
Lady

Lady Lurcher, there was no situation, however exalted, to which I had not a right to make pretensions; and, flattered by youthful expectation, I indulged the most sanguine hopes for my future establishment, in what you call an honourable connexion.

“Behold the reverse: hurried from all the joys of society, to be buried in the country, with no other associates but a sick querulous mother, a preaching father, an insane idiot of a brother, neither of whom could contribute in any degree to my pleasure, or I to theirs! The torrid and frigid zones were not more distant, or more opposite in their natures, than their ideas and mine of what was capable of constituting happiness, and were necessary auxiliaries to form the joys of existence.

“After the death of his wife, the Rector shut himself up in his study with *you*, his beloved darling; while I was left to keep company with old Joan
and

and Honour, the superannuated fixtures of the Parsonage ; or to wander forth alone, "like one forlorn for slighted love, or crazed by care," around the domains of the Grange ; once the scene of my youthful mirth, now for ever shut against me. I really believe, had I not been soon relieved from my despairing *ennui*, I should have escaped from it, by making a running noose in my sash, and hanging myself on one of those dismal yew-trees, that waved their sombre branches before my small casement, echoing back my long-drawn sighs in mournful cadence !

"Fortune, that had long witnessed my miseries, was preparing to reward my suffering endurance. In one of my solitary rambles through the adjoining forest, I met a Nobleman who had admired, followed, and avowed a passion for me when in the zenith of my power. But being more than old enough for my sire, and not supposed by the world
a mar-

a marrying man, I then paid little attention to his suit ! The case was now altered ; he had not a crowd of young rivals to contend with for my favour—I no longer fostered fallacious hopes of forming a splendid alliance.

“ His Lordship declared that his joy was unbounded at again beholding me, that his visit to the Grange was for no other purpose than to find an opportunity of throwing himself at my feet, to liberate me from the detestable solitude to which I was maliciously condemned, and restore me to a world where I was calculated by beauty, wit, and talents to make so conspicuous a figure ! To be brief, he renewed his suit with ardour, enumerated the advantages his protection could purchase, offered to restore me to those enjoyments for which my soul panted, to bestow on me that splendour and *eclat*, few of my sex could boast possessing, and yet fewer withstand the temptation
of

of receiving.”—Here she threw her eyes round the apartment.—“ I long insisted on marriage, because it was a necessary ceremony to give consequence to riches! He demurred for two reasons: his natural antipathy to wear those trammels that fetter the free will, and act as an extinguisher to love; interest was his second plea, having at that period a proud mother living, who had, in her own disposal, a large fortune, and would never have consented to the heir of her ancient House uniting himself to the daughter of a country Parson.

“ His Lordship believed himself at that time violently attached to me, and when he is actuated by *caprice*, he stops at nothing to gratify his passions. Being resolved to carry his point, he gave me a promise, which I saw him sign, to make me his wife on the death of the Dowager; finding I could bring him to nothing further, and my state of durance becoming every day more irksome,

irksome, I consented to accompany him to London, where, to gratify his vanity and my inclination, he has procured for me every pleasure and luxury that the capital can produce: hitherto I have not had a wish unaccomplished, a whim that is not immediately complied with, nor a demand that is not directly gratified."

"I have, Laurina, with a heart that palpitates with contending emotions, heard you to an end. Now candidly answer me, can you be happy in this situation?—have you peace of mind?—does not, in the *interregnum* from dissipation, the still small voice of Conscience whisper a condemnation of your conduct, in despite of those deceptive glozing arguments, those fancied cruelties of which you complain, that you have created to palliate to yourself the sinful folly of your actions?—Tell me truly; in the retrospective and silent hour of night, does not your mental vision

vision present to your troubled mind the figure of a dying mother?—do you not hear her last request, to be good and virtuous?—perceive you not an expiring father, praying for and blessing the ungracious child, whose conduct accelerated his death, by her dereliction from honour and duty?”

“While I thus apostrophized to her feelings, I saw her shudder, her countenance change through the rouge which covered her cheeks; but she made an effort to prevent my triumph, by endeavouring to conceal those sensations so new to her bosom; attempting to force a smile into her face, and answering in a hurried manner my interrogatories.

“Yes, yes, my sententious brother, rest assured I am perfectly content with the lot I have chosen; you may, therefore, save yourself the trouble of preaching—your old-fashioned notions will not turn me from my purpose of enjoying the present moment; for all the moderns,

ders, and not a few of the ancient philosophers avow, it is all we mortals have for it! Who then, give me leave to ask, that is a free agent, would voluntarily embrace a life of seclusion, poverty, mortification, and self-denial, when all the joys of this luxurious delectable world courted their acceptance, with its various *agrémens*, multiplied gratifications, and enchanting pleasures, while its delightful, alluring, fascinating, and voluptuous enjoyments are at their command?"

"Laurina, I cannot believe your assertions; these are the vaunting ebullitions of a proud heart, that paints vice in vivid colours, because it will not acknowledge its errors. You are impelled through false shame, like the Spartan boy, to hug to your bosom the enemy that will destroy you; and, rather than discover you have been wrong, allow it to lacerate your breast, and batten on your vitals."

"Oh

“ Oh horrid creature ! what an idea has your gloomy fancy conjured up to affright me ! Your classical simile is not well adapted to my case ; my *heart* is, be assured, perfectly safe ; I am not in love with his Lordship, though I have a strong predilection for those surrounding comforts, which I had no other means of procuring.”

“ Unprincipled, incorrigible girl, you are lost beyond all hope ;—the most abandoned of your sex could not have made a more shameless avowal of depravity. With mingled grief and rage against their authors, I perceive the cause of your dereliction from the precepts inculcated in early youth ; it arises from the detestable doctrines of the new school of *soi-disant* philosophers, whose system is so refragable, on which you are rearing a structure of happiness, that will inevitably destroy your joys here, and your hopes of an hereafter.”

“ I

“I will hear no more of this;—I have made my election, and will not have my choice combated by your puerile common-place arguments. The precepts I follow, inculcate the omnipotence of truth; I have therefore very candidly given you cogent reasons for my past conduct, which you, who are its original cause, had no right to expect. According to your ideas of those glaring evils, it is incumbent on you to snatch me from their consequences; say, therefore, if you are willing to act a brother's part, and do me an essential service?”

“Name it, Laurina; and, if it is of a nature I can in honour comply with, you may command me.”

“This then it is;—The fickleness of his Lordship has long been known to the world, of course it is no secret to me. It has been hinted that he is at this time pursuing another amour; this gives me no further uneasiness than the

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mortification of being neglected, perhaps forsaken, for a creature, who, I find, is decidedly inferior to me in every sense of the word. I hear that, to those who have the "fault to outlive his liking," he is as ungrateful and penurious, as he is extravagant and profuse while they retain his favour. Now, if I was his wife, he might keep fifty mistresses without giving me the least annoyance."

"But, if you apprehend your power is on the decline, and so near its fall, that he has selected another victim to sacrifice to his love of variety, so circumstanced, on what can you found the hope of becoming Lady Lorimore? and by what means can I assist you to obtain a situation, which - I allow I should be happy to see you possess?— Were I at liberty to act as I think I ought, I most certainly should demand satisfaction from the seducer of my sister's honour; but our father, who

ever looked on duelling as premeditated murder, obliged me, in his last moments, to give him my sacred promise I would not take upon myself his punishment, but leave him to the vengeance of his Creator, whose sacred laws his conduct has violated."

"Had you known the noble culprit as well as I, you might have saved yourself the trouble of making the vow, and been safe from the fear of committing manslaughter! Had his Lordship accepted all the challenges that have been sent him by fathers, husbands, and brothers, whose daughters, wives, and sisters he has injured, and seduced by the allurements of his specious tongue and handsome person, aided by his rank and fortune, he would have exhibited a prototype of the man stuck full of arrows, at the bottom of the old Almanack at Hartlebury.

"No, no, John; his Lordship knows better than to throw away a life

he so well understands how to enjoy, and so highly values, to gratify the capricious humours of every poor devil, out of whose family he has condescended to select a female to honour by his devoirs. I remember our father used to tell us, from the pulpit, that it was “easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven!”—This difficulty it is, I presume, that renders them so very unwilling to make the visit; for they have too much to lose by death, and too little to hope, willingly to expedite their journey.

“I therefore found my hopes of becoming a wife, on my knowledge of his disposition; I am convinced he will not fight; now, very fortunately, he knows you will! He has heard of your determined pursuit, and tremendous battle with his brother Peer, the Lord of Burford. This has given him such an opinion of your violent passions and desperate

perate courage, that he thinks you a very Don John, who would kill half a dozen men for a breathing, "one down, another come on." Indeed, had you not at that time been supposed irrecoverably senseless, I firmly believe the valiant Peer, maugre his violent passion, would not have ventured to take me away from Hartlebury."

"Absurd, inconsiderate Laurina, what is this to the purpose? what do you mean by this rodomontade? do you suppose your brother will debase himself, and act the part of a bully or trickster, to frighten this despicable Lordling into matrimony? My proud heart cannot condescend to such meanness; did not my oath preclude me, I would oblige him openly, and before the world to do you justice; to restore you to society, be assured I would cheerfully expose a life that I have long held valueless."

"You mistake me, John; I do not wish you to do any thing derogatory to
I 3 your

your romantic sense of honour. Wait upon him to-morrow morning—though high in office, he is easy of access; use your own discretion to introduce yourself; inform him that you have seen me, that I have convinced you that I consented to leave my paternal home, on the condition of his promising to marry me on the death of his mother; that event having since happened, you come as an injured brother to claim the fulfilment of his engagement, or that he must prepare to abide the consequences of a refusal. His Lordship's mind impressed with your Hotspur achievements, and not knowing you are precluded by your promise to my father from demanding satisfaction, will be terrified by the alternative, and ultimately prefer a licence from Doctors' Commons, to the verdict of a Middlesex Jury."

"It was repugnant to my feelings to intimidate this recreant mortal into
doing

doing justice to Laurina, who, by her own account, knew very well the terms on which she left her father's house ; but, as he had made this promise, if I could induce him to perform it, and restore her to society, as it need not be known when the nuptials took place, I felt it was a duty incumbent on me to make the effort ; for a sense of pride which would then arise from the consequence of her situation, would, I hoped, preclude her from forming the connection I so much dreaded with Sir Thomas Lurcher.

“ After some further conversation, she shewed me the paper on which she founded her hopes of success. Its being neither stamped nor witnessed, I feared it would not be looked on as valid in any court, except that of honour ! I gave her my assurance to see his Lordship ; as to how I should act, I could not then say, as I meant to be guided in my
I 4 behaviour

behaviour by the contingencies of the moment.

“Morning was struggling for pre-eminence with night, before I reflected that it was time to depart; neither of us having thought of supper, Laurina pressed me to take some refreshment, which I had just refused, when the door of the *boudoir* was thrown open with violence, and his Lordship stood before us. Rage flashed from his eye, as he tauntingly exclaimed—

“I beg pardon, Madam, for my *mal-à-propos* interruption; it certainly was wrong to break in upon a lady's retirement *sans cérémonie*; but I will shew my *politesse* by instantly withdrawing.”

“Laurina, who had appeared rather startled at his entrance, soon recovered her presence of mind; guessing his mistake was the cause of his anger (for, when he advanced, I was sitting by her side on the *duchesse*, holding one of her hands,

hands, being about to take my leave), she arose with much dignity, saying—

“The only answer that is necessary to make to your illiberal *inuendoes*, is to introduce to your Lordship this gentleman as my brother; who, restored to mental convalescence, comes, deputed by the will of my father, to claim at your hands his sister.”

“The Peer at this speech, starting with evident surprise, exhibited in his bloodless countenance and depressed eye all the horrors of conscious guilt; and his trembling knees evinced the cowardly emotions that agitated his faithless heart, as his looks met mine, which darted angry glances of defiance, contempt, and vengeance. At the sight of this dastardly Lord, I forgot the promise made to my parent, not to demand satisfaction for a sister’s injuries, a father’s death, and the overwhelming ruin and ignominy his libertinism

tinism had for ever entailed upon an honest race.

“Those exacerbad passions which I have before described, that, when aroused to a certain pitch, are no longer under the controul of reason, urged me on to an instant explanation. I spoke of his baseness, and Laurina's wrongs ; of the contract of marriage he had given her, which I peremptorily insisted on his fulfilling in my presence, in the course of eight and forty hours ; or, at the expiration of that time, to meet me in the field, prepared to finish the climax of his crimes by taking my life ; without the Fates, weary of persecuting mortals, meant to give to my hand the honourable achievement of ridding the earth of a monster of depravity, that had long groaned under his multiplied enormities !

“I cannot now remember all that my maddened brain occasioned me to utter, or describe all his simulating attempts,

attempts, by subterfuge, to turn me from my purpose. He had the insolence to propose to me to barter my honour, by consenting to accept a lucrative employment, with which I should be immediately invested; and to settle upon Laurina an annuity equivalent to the jointure she might have a right to expect if he made her his wife.

“ I spurned, with the most determined rage, this contumelious offer, this humiliating proposal; and avowed my resolution of unshrinkingly adhering to my first intention, of seeing him, within the appointed time, the husband of Laurina; or punishing him for his breach of promise, faith, and honour to my sister, if I did not receive my death from his hands.

“ His Lordship, finding me not to be moved from my purpose by all his artful proffers, blandishments, and courtier-like *manœuvrings*, appeared to give up the point. After having pondered

about five minutes, he asked my address, which having wrote on a card, he said I should not fail receiving, on the morrow, his final determination.



CHAP. XI.

“ I RETURNED to Osborn’s Hotel, exhausted by mental exertion and bodily fatigue, that occasioned me, when I retired to bed, to fall into a profound sleep, from which I was awakened, at eleven o’clock, by a waiter, who brought me a letter from his Lordship ; in which he informed me his love for Laurina, and not the bravadoes of her brother, whose indecorous behaviour, for her sake,

sake, he was willing to excuse, had conquered his distaste to matrimony, and he meant to give her a legal claim to his title and fortune.

“ He wished the ceremony to be performed with the utmost secrecy, that the world might be induced to suppose it was an event which had taken place anterior to the death of his mother, in compliment to whose prejudices, it had not been publicly announced ; therefore he meant the nuptials to be solemnized, by a special licence, at a villa he had on the banks of the Thames, at twelve o'clock that night ; it not being in his power to steal from the business of the State, for his own gratification, till that late hour. He would then take me up at Osborn's in his carriage ; observing that it would be useless for me to call in Harley Street, as Laurina, having acquiesced in this arrangement, had quitted town, to prepare for our reception.

“ Credulous

“Credulous fool that I was, to be deluded by the specious, wary arts of an old, experienced, wily courtier; for, certain it was, this note lulled me into perfect security, readily believing that he was actuated by fear, doubting that a bullet, directed by the hand of a brother to avenge a sister’s injured honour, might have received its commission, and find a place in his guilty heart.

“I sincerely rejoiced that the *dénouement* was likely to be peaceful, and Laurina’s reputation patched up without bloodshed; for my mind, being calmed by Nature’s kind restorer, I recollected the solemn promise I had given my father, not to take the power of vengeance into my own hands; though my unbridled passions had, on witnessing the triumphant entry and taunting insolence of this lordly paramour, been roused to a state of effervescence, which drove every thing from my memory
but

but resentment for the humiliation I suffered in witnessing such a scene !

“ Happy in being enabled to fulfil the request of my father, in the way best calculated to gratify him, had he been still in a state of existence, I resolved not to leave my apartment that day, but to employ the time in writing to my uncles, and the Rector of Springfield :—from his kind friendship I had no concealments ; I therefore informed him of my meeting with Laurina, the *brusque* conversation I had with his Lordship, and the fortunate result of my interference.

“ After having sealed and given my letters to a waiter, I sat down to amuse myself, by perusing the memorial of Henry Hopeful’s favourite Amantha.

“ I found the classical footman was correct in his ideas ; that he had an intuitive perception of existing manners and living characters. The memoir of Amantha was a brief abstract of a forceful

ful imagination, and an ingenuous heart. It appeared to have been written in haste, evidently the faithful transcript of an agonized bosom, delineating with the pen of Truth the wrongs she had sustained by her trusting confidence and grateful attachment to an unprincipled seducer, and the base, unmanly coalition of his mean, grovelling, despicable family to goad her on to ruin, death, and destruction ! But you shall see this interesting manuscript, and judge for yourself ; it was my intention to have returned it to Henry the next day, whom I fear, from my breach of promise, has classed me in the number of his *doubtful characters*. But procrastination is the thief of time, though the hour of retribution, I hope and trust, may yet arrive.

“ At about half past twelve, a person, dressed in his Lordship’s livery, presented me a note ; the purport of its contents was, that he had very particular reasons,

reasons, of which he would inform me when we met, for changing his first mode of travelling, meaning to go up the river in his barge, in which he was now waiting at Whitehall; he desired I would lose no time, but follow the messenger. Strange as this appeared, I had yet no doubts, but blindfold ran into the pit so artfully dug for my destruction; indeed I gave myself no time to think, but wrapped in my great-coat, to avoid the night air, for I was still an invalid, I followed my conductor to the water side, where a large boat with half a dozen men, who appeared laying on their oars, was in waiting.

“I had no sooner jumped into it, than I found myself roughly seized by a couple of stout fellows, who forced a gag into my mouth, and tied my legs and hands, in despite of all the opposition I could make. In this helpless state I was laid in the bottom of the vessel on a cloak, and the person who
had

had inveigled me on board, addressing me in French, assured me that all exertion to free myself, or avoid my fate, would be useless; that no personal injury was intended me; I was only going to take a *petit voyage* to cool my heated imagination, and restore me to a sense of my own condition in society, that I might awake from my ambitious day-dream, of supposing that I was to call one of the first men in the kingdom, my brother-in-law!

“ I now perceived that I had been vilely tricked into the power of villains, by the artifice of his hypocritical Lordship. Where I was going, and what was to be my future destination, I could not even guess, and was precluded from the power of inquiring. I had heard of persons being kidnapped, and sold as slaves to the plantations, or sent as soldiers to the East Indies; which, or if either of these was to be my future fate, I could not determine. At the present moment,

moment, I saw I might make it worse by impotent struggles, therefore resolved to suffer patiently, and await a more favourable epocha for my liberation.

“ After rowing hard for some time, which appeared the more tedious from my uneasy situation, we came alongside this ship, when my legs being untied, I was forced up its side; my attendant having seen the Captain, and held with him a conversation of some length, returned into the boat, which rowed away with much celerity, leaving me a wretched prisoner. I was soon ushered into the infernal den, where our friendship first commenced; therefore a description of that receptacle of wretchedness, or the sensations it excited on a near view, I need not attempt delineating to you, whose bosom was doubtless actuated by the same ideas, occasioned by a similarity of sufferings. Having endured, in a state of sullen despair,

despair, its surrounding horrors for a few days, I felt that to yield thus passively to my fate, was unmanly ; I therefore resolved to make an exertion, even should it fail of success ;—by the power of a bribe, I induced our Cerberus to entreat the sovereign of this wooden kingdom to permit me into his august presence, having something of consequence to impart.

“ My request was at length complied with, and I was introduced to an audience with this freebooter, who reclined in ferocious majesty, smoking his hooka, on something like a couch. Knowing that nothing was to be gained by rough measures, I addressed him with much civility, begging to be informed why I was, without having committed any fault against my King or country, that rendered me amenable to its laws, brought by force, bound hand and foot, on board his vessel, to be banished to another land, far removed from my friends,

friends, relations, and patrimonial possessions.

“ You have the gift of the gab, young fellow, but it will stand you in no great stead; for all that I am at liberty to tell you is, what I suppose you pretty well know already, that you may thank yourself for it; having had the folly and presumption of attempting to bully a Nobleman into marrying his concubine, your sister; therefore his Lordship thought it a very lenient punishment to send you to make a trip with me to the East; and as you are so fond of fighting, he thinks you may as well employ your valour against the enemies of your country, as its friends. I advise you to take a smack at Tippoo; and as you are such an *aspiring* genius, who knows but you may return a Nabob, as some of your countrymen have done, who went out with less pretensions, and came home

home rolling in pagodas, and purchased the family seats of their old masters !”

“ I checked my rising indignation at this insolent irony, convinced that passionate recrimination would avail nought towards bettering my condition. Like a lion taken in the toils, my roaring would only have occasioned sport for my unfeeling keeper, made him more attentive to secure the fastenings of my cage, and have annihilated every future hope of liberation.

“ I therefore made an effort to humanize this sea brute, by a brief recital of the story of my wrongs, in a style adapted to his comprehension, and with a pathos that I thought would melt his rugged breast, ever and anon calling on him to say, “ Would you not, Captain, have acted in the same manner, as a son and brother ?—I know you would.” Then attempting to inflame his national pride, by asserting the character of a British sailor was proverbial for honour, generosity,

generosity, and valour, that this conviction flattered me with the hope he would not consent to aid the injustice by which I was oppressed.

“ While thus I spoke, he appeared to listen attentively ; at one time knitting his brows, at another leering from under his bushy eyebrows looks of subtle cunning, that augured my oratorical powers had made but little progress in my favour.

“ This determined me to shift my attack, and to try the supposed infallibility of gold ! In the course of my narration I had informed him that, by the death of my father, I was master of a decent independency, which I had intended to increase by prosecuting the profession of physic, to the study of which I had devoted some years of my life ; I offered him one hundred guineas to suffer me to escape.

“ This aroused him from his reverie, and puffing a cloud of tobacco smoke, that

that he had been drawing up the last five minutes, into my face, and dashing the pipe from him, he vociferated from his Stentorian lungs—

“ Who would be the fool then, damme?—Set you on shore, that’s a good one, my hearty ; to put it in your power to prosecute me and my employer, for detaining your pretty person. No, no, younker, I am not to be palavered over in that way by such a fair-weathered chap as you ; gilding the bait, my tight one, will not help you to catch an old sea shark !”

“ I offered to bind myself under any obligation, and annex any penalty to its forfeiture, that if he would permit me to make my escape, I would not attempt to injure him, directly nor indirectly ; or expose him to the vengeance of his employer, by any attempt to call upon his Lordship for satisfaction.

“ This sea porpoise either did not, or appeared not to put the least confidence in my most solemn asseverations,
answering

answering to all I could urge, that part of what I said might be true, or it might not, but it was no affair of his at any rate. He owed more gratitude to his Lordship than to a stranger; for by his interest he once saved him from dancing on nothing, only for a little buccaneering business, that he and a few of his shipmates had been engaged in, and therefore it was but fair that he should venture in his service, that *neck* he had prevented from being stretched.

“So, do you hear, no more jabbering about bribery and corruption; but recollect, younker, there’s honour among thieves.—All I can do for you is, when we are out at sea, to liberate you from the other fellows in the hold, allowing you to swing a hammock between decks; and, if you behave yourself so as to deserve it, mayhap your treatment will be better than you seem to expect.”—

He then informed me the trunk I had brought to the hotel, was sealed up and in his possession; it should be safely

delivered to me as soon as it was out of my power to make a bad use of my money, if I had any in it, by seducing the honesty of his scoundrels, who might not be quite so staunch in the interest of their employer as himself.

“ For this appearance of lenity I was obliged to be thankful, and seem contented. This conversation convinced me I had no chance of escaping; my arch enemy having laid his plots too deep, to be circumvented by one young enough to be his son. The sending my portmanteau gave me some pleasure, for, added to the gratification arising from a change of linen, I had in it Bank bills for above two hundred pounds, which I had received just before I left the country, arising from the sale of the furniture and stock of the farm at Hartlebury. This sum I meant to have deposited in the hands of a banker; but it appeared now a fortunate resource, and might, if properly applied, assist to extricate me from my present difficulties.

“ I

“ I perceived that I was fated to make a voyage to the East Indies, where the vessel was bound; but I did not despair, through the assistance of this money, to be enabled to return to Europe. I meditated, as soon as I was landed, to make an application to the Chief Justice, tell my story, and the motives of my detention, without any doubts of being released; as luckily I could convince him I was no impostor, having papers of sufficient consequence in my possession, to corroborate the proofs, and to enforce conviction of my identity.

“ I therefore resolved to resign myself to those evils that were now inevitable, patiently enduring my present inflictions, and fortifying my mind with Christian hope, that the Omnipotent Disposer of events, who had hitherto conducted and supported me through such various trials, and miraculously restored my reason from mental thralldom, would, in his own good time, extricate my body from the unjust and coercive

bondage by which it was now confined.

“ By thus reasoning on causes and events, I had brought my mind to a temperate composure, and I suffered my inflictions patiently, without exhausting myself by unavailing complaints. At the expiration of ten days, I was sent for by the redoubtable Commander. When I entered his cabin, I found him lying in a recumbent posture, and appearing to labour under much pain : he thus addressed me :—

“ I think, Master Carter, you told me you once studied doctoring. Now, if so be, mayhap you can do me a favour ; and, if you likes to undertake the thing, you shan't fare the worse for it, I promise you.”

“ I bowed assent, and he proceeded.

“ Well then, this is the case : about twelve months since, being engaged with a French privateer, yard-arm and yard-arm, I received a gun-shot wound in my right-leg ; it was never properly cured,

cured, and is now broke out again ; and the damned stupid fellow, my surgeon, says my blood is in such a bad state, and it puts on such an appearance, that I must consent to have it lopped off, or it will mortify. Now you must know, younker, I am cursed unwilling to stump about on a wooden peg, therefore I want you to look at it ; and if so be you can contrive to preserve my precious limb, you shall not find Ben Bowsprit ungrateful."

"I answered that I had studied physic intently, meaning to have made it my profession, and had attended anatomical and surgical lectures, therefore was not wholly ignorant of the nature of curing wounds. The little knowledge I possessed I would cheerfully exert to serve him, and should feel highly gratified if my skill enabled me to save his leg from amputation. But I desired the person, who had already attended him, might be sent for, to take off the
K 3 dressings,

dressings, when I would give my opinion without reservation.

“ Oh ho, d——e, I understand at what you would be heaving—this is upon the score of ceremony; that’s an old story; many an honest fellow has been run down and sunk by the commander Death, while the doctors have been settling, when called to a consultation, who should speak first; or disputing whether, in compliment to their brother big-wig, who had undertaken him before, they ought to object to his opinion, though quite contrary to their *own*;—this important point being settled in the negative, they take their fees, brush off, and the poor devil of a patient is left to die regularly, for the honour of the profession!

“ Now I have no intention to be quite so complaisant to my surgeon, of whose skill I have no great opinion. He is a raw Scotchman, just arrived from the Edinburgh Hospitals, whose conceit seems to keep pace with his ignorance, who would have no objection to cutting
me

me up, by way of keeping his hand in practice. If, therefore, you think you can splice the timbers, I am willing to put my leg into your hands ; and Sawney shan't divide the credit, for he shall have nothing to do with me again.—So here goes," tearing off the bandages, and exhibiting a wound in a most desperate state of inflammation.

" It evidently appeared to have been treated wrong, and on a first view I could not decide ; but I informed the terrified Captain that I hoped, by care and attention, the limb might be preserved. After having felt his pulse, I told him candidly my opinion of the case, offering to exert my skill, and hoped to make a cure ; but I positively refused to undertake it, or even to answer for his life, if he would not consent to be wholly guided by my advice, as to his regimen, and to take the medicines I should prescribe. This speech was strengthened by the serious turn of my countenance, which having watched most attentively,

he promised faithfully not to disobey orders.

“ I now undertook my *first* patient, of whom I was very ambitious to make a cure. I obliged him to abstain from his favourite beverage, brandy, and content himself with old Port, of which I allowed him a pint a day, and he entered upon a regular course of bark. I occasioned all the unctious, greasy dressings, which served more to irritate than heal, to be removed, and applied simple poultices of Goulard. By this management, Captain Bowsprit's general habit being strengthened, his leg put on a healthy appearance; and I entertained great hopes of making a complete cure of what I may say, without vanity, was in such a desperate state when I first beheld it, as might have puzzled the most scientific surgeons.

“ This unexpected renovation to life and limb, rejoiced the Commander, and made him my firm friend, and the Scottish Esculapius my bitter foe. I was in this
state

state when you, my young friend, was brought on board. Your situation seemed so similar to my own, that it called forth all my sympathy ; I resolved to serve you to the extent of my limited powers, and I sincerely rejoice in having been able to mitigate your bodily sufferings, and in some degree, I hope, have amused your mind from dwelling too intensely on your own griefs, by calling upon you to commiserate mine.

“ The philosophic David Hume observes, it is an “ ill-natured satisfaction that we derive from knowing others are more miserable than ourselves.”—This always appeared to me an assertion without a proof, which gives me courage to dispute his authority ; for let the most philanthropic being existing ask his heart, when it is oppressed by care, if he does not feel comfort from the idea, there are yet others as wretched as himself. This gratification arises not from a vindictive or uncharitable disposition, but from the attenuating conviction

viction that he is not *alone* selected as a mark for Malice to shoot her arrows at, but only condemned to experience that share of misfortune, attendant on all in this state of trial!"

With this apostrophe Mr. Carter concluded his narrative, and received the grateful thanks and kind commiseration of the attentive Stuart, for the usefulness of the lesson his sorrows had afforded him, whom our readers will remember was a fellow-sufferer, from the iron fangs of powerful oppression.



CHAP. XII.

WE feel it incumbent to say a few words in vindication of ourselves, for swerving from the constant practice of our contemporary labourers in the Novel vineyard, having diverged from the beaten track, and given the story of Mr. Carter without any hiatus, *inter-regnum*, or introduction of irrelevant matter to interrupt the train of events; usages very commonly resorted to by modern authors, to stimulate waning curiosity, and provoke the palled appetite, from a supposition their readers may be induced to swallow in small portions what, peradventure, might nauseate if taken in the aggregate.

We have often felt ourselves mortified, teased, and vexed when perusing an interesting work, whose editor has, in compliance with this book-making system, divided and subdivided the subject, disturbing the whole with much admired confusion ; putting to flight all the sympathizing feelings excited by the well-sung woes of the hero, or heroine of the story, by a *mal-a-propos* introduction of personages, who, if they had not appeared in the character of *intruders*, precluding our present gratification, might at another time have been welcomed with pleasure ; but detaining us, perforce, from company, by whom we were amused, had been agreeably entertained, and were unwilling to quit, they are received with regret, viewed with apathy, and parted from with joy.

These, that appeared to us good and sufficient reasons, we hope will meet the approbation of our fair readers, for our tenderness in reciting the woes of Mr.

Carter, without lacerating their sensitive bosoms by hanging them on the tenter-hooks of procrastinated curiosity ; for we are conscious of having hitherto kept to our favourite text—of doing as we would be done by !

We dare, therefore, boldly appeal to the most determined lover of the great and wonderful, to acquit us of wanting incidents of the most *horrific* nature, to interrupt the conversational matter of fact recital of Mr. Carter, could we have descended from the altitudes of our own opinion to follow the usages of our compeers ; the former of which, we fear, we are too apt to adhere to with sexual pertinacity ! Yet we beg it to be understood that we did not *prose* on for lack of interesting, surprising, astonishing, and marvellous events, to have *broke* the clue of our narrative, being amply furnished with most alarming circumstances, incidents very terrific, and situations vastly appalling, as any that ever were, or
ever

ever will be met with, by a couple of heroes devoted to seek marine adventures on the high seas.

A few of which we will take leave to enumerate, to convince the sceptical critic; such as their encountering a dreadful storm in the Bay of Biscay, in which the ship was saved by the nautical knowledge, and unwearied exertions of Andrew Stuart; that before they had refitted her damages, they were attacked by a French letter of marque, whom they engaged for three glasses; that by the coolness, skill, and bravery of the said Andrew and his friend Carter, who fought with equal valour by his side, she was obliged to sheer off. Captain Benjamin Bowsprit being confined to his bed, he had deputed our young sailor to supply his place, which he did much to his satisfaction, and his own honour. After the battle, the vessel being left in a crippled condition, they were obliged to make for the Madeira Islands to refit; and while there,

there, they were treated with a hurricane, a tornado, and a water-spout!—If this does not give them a claim to the title of wonderful travellers, no natural occurrences can!

Though we have not permitted these *trifling* peccadilloes to stop our pen, the gentle reader will suppose it made innumerable chasms in the story, that was continued and cemented by the narrator as well as situation and circumstances would permit; which, being thus unavoidably lengthened by contingencies, helped to amuse these unfortunate friends through the greater part of their eventful voyage, that was attended with more comforts than either, from their gloomy prospects when they left England, dared promise themselves with enjoying.

Captain Bowsprit, who felt and acknowledged the obligations to be boundless that he owed to the saviour of his precious limb, could not refuse granting to his reiterated solicitations the liberation

liberation of his favourite Andrew Stuart; therefore, as soon as they had quitted sight of the white cliffs of Albion, his prayer was acceded to, and Andrew permitted to ascend and enjoy the society of his friend, the luxury of inhaling pure air, and to swing his hammock between decks along-side his protector, partake of his few comforts, eat of his bread, and drink of his cup.

They were thus situated when those attacks, to which we have before alluded, were made on the good ship Vronhausen, by tempest and battle; in which the nautical skill, and resolute courage of Andrew were exerted with such good effect, as evidently to be the primary cause of her escaping from these perils, that without his aid appeared inevitable.

His conduct failed not to make him a friend in the breast of the Commander; for this marauding freebooter, among innumerable follies, faults, and crimes, had *one* meritorious good quality

lity—a high sense of gratitude for benefits conferred ; but this most admirable and cardinal virtue in others, with him degenerated almost into a vice, for to its powerful influence we have seen, in the case of his Lordship, he would without scruple sacrifice justice, honesty, faith, honour, and humanity.

He now frequently made the two friends his companions : in the course of their voyage they often dined at his table, when his mind being unbent, and his heart exhilarated by good cheer, he would in confidence recount to them many of his adventures, his hair-breadth escapes by land and by water, for boldly daring an enfranchisement from poverty, by pursuing the fickle jade, Fortune, through devious paths and venturous ways, for which he swore he ought to have been rewarded with her *highest* favours ! In this his hearers perfectly acquiesced ; for, in their opinion, he most certainly merited a conspicuous exaltation !

At

At the time they were forced upon his notice, and compelled to accompany him to the shores of Indostan, he was arrived at the acme of his ambition, being sole owner and Captain of the *Vronhausen*; she was a stout Dutch built vessel, denominated a free-trader; that is, her Commander took leave to do as he pleased, go where he pleased, and trade with whom he pleased, either to the East or West Indies, to traffic with friends or foes; whether nations were at war or at peace, it was the same to him, if he could but acquire *gold*—that seductive metal, which whether it is to be the bane, or the blessing of our lives, wholly depends on the use or abuse of its power.

Captain Bowsprit had been put in possession of enough of that precious ore, to enable him to purchase the *Vronhausen*, by marrying the buxom widow of a Dutch skipper. By this ponderous alliance he became the father of a daughter; the young *cub* he had brought with him to England for education, having

having placed her at a fashionable seminary to be *licked* into shape, flattering himself with being able to accumulate a large fortune, and to make her, in despite of Nature, a fine lady: to accomplish this much wished-for desideratum, he fearlessly ventured both soul and body!

He was then making a trading voyage to Bengal and Madras, but ready to do any dirty work, or run any chances that would accelerate those pursuits; he had been employed to transport those unfortunate wretches who were kidnapped from their friends, by the nefarious procedure of the *honourable* society of Crimps, to replenish with food for powder the Asiatic troops. When his young companions talked of the cruelties and deceptions practised to procure recruits for the Eastern world, his answer invariably was, that as it was a service few would voluntarily enter into, and as our possessions in that part of the globe depended on the force we could

could keep there, to subject and overawe the Princes of the country, a little gentle coercion was necessary to support the military establishment, adding—“ You know, younkers, stratagem is allowable in love and war ! ”

Finding their philanthropic arguments made no impression on the stubborn callosity of his heart, they ceased to importune him on the subject ; contenting themselves to use the interest they possessed, to ameliorate the sufferings of their fellow-prisoners, while their own were greatly alleviated by the flattering prospect of freedom ; for Captain Bow-sprit had assured them that, in return for their patient endurance, good behaviour, and united services to preserve both him and his ship, instead of complying with his Lordship's orders of delivering them up to the commanding Officer, as enlisted men, he would, on their arrival in Asia, set them ashore as free passengers, leaving them at liberty to consult their own inclinations, whether

they

they would try their fortunes in India, or return to Europe.

With this promise they were obliged to be content; for no entreaties could prevail on him to leave them on any of the islands at which they touched, as he had pledged his honour to his lordly patron to carry them to Bengal, and there they must go, willing or unwilling! Fearful he might revoke his promise, they ceased to importune him, thanking him for the favours he meant to confer.

Having now seen our compelled voyagers far advanced to the torrid zone, and their prospects brightened by exhilarating expectations, we will leave them to pursue their watery course, having weathered the Lion Mountain, sailed round Table Bay, and safely anchored at the Cape of *Good Hope*! while we return to England to take a retrospective view of the other *dramatis personæ*, fated to perform a part in our history.



CHAP. XIII.

WHEN Isabella recovered from the swoon she had been thrown into by terror, on the morning destined for the celebration of her nuptials, she found herself in a carriage that was proceeding with much velocity, the blinds drawn up, and she was supported by a man of a most ferocious and forbidding appearance, to whose person she was perfectly a stranger. On her memory's returning, she demanded of him who he was, by whose orders he acted, and to what place he was conveying her?

He answered surlily, that he was taking her to the county prison, where belike she would stay till some of her sweethearts

sweethearts discharged the debt for which she had been arrested ; that as to her seafaring spark, he, by that time, was safe enough in limbo, for having attempted to rescue her after she had been touched ; which being point blank against the law of the realm, he must answer for, and likewise the lives and limbs of some of his followers, who had been endangered in the scuffle ;—for his part, he was determined to do his duty, and lodge her securely behind the iron bars ; therefore advised her not to think of giving him the go-by, as he was furnished with fire-arms, pointing to a pair of pistols in the pocket of the carriage ; assuring her, if she was refractory, he should make no scruple of using the poppers, in performance of the duty he owed his employers.

This brutal speech of her companion brought to her recollection the unnatural and vile conduct of her sister, in turning a gift, that she unwillingly received, into a debt, and demanding

the payment of a sum, that she was well assured was too large to be discharged by her affianced husband. This propelled her to reflect on the persecutions, his unfortunate attachment to her might devote the estimable Stuart to suffer. It was then her fortitude forsook her, and she wept tears of bitter agony. If he was indeed imprisoned for trying to save her from ignominy, she perceived his ruin was inevitable; for as his detention must preclude him from joining his ship, he would be looked on as a deserter, and punished accordingly.

Her gentle heart felt more forcibly the woes and misery she had innocently occasioned her friends to endure; than those humiliating misfortunes she believed awaited herself. Her ardent mind portrayed Andrew's distress at her loss; the affectionate exclamations of the friendly Mrs. Hunt, when she knew not how Fate had disposed of her adopted daughter; for her brutal escort had informed her that he had run off with

with her in the scuffle that ensued after her arrest, that they knew not by whom she had been spirited away, or whence conveyed.

This persecuted young creature had no reason to dispute the authenticity of the tale told by her companion, or the cause of his thus exercising the power delegated to him, as it explained the motive for her hasty journey ; therefore she condescended to ask him no further questions, but allowed the horses to be changed, and herself to be impelled onward with the utmost speed, without murmuring, or making the least inquiry where she was going to be carried, or at what period her travels would end. To Isabella the chicanery of the law was unknown, nor had she any idea how far its attendant satellites were warranted to conduct those, on whom they laid their remorseless fangs !

They had travelled twenty-four hours, without stopping to sleep, or long enough to eat a regular meal ; to prevent

the necessity of which, a basket of cold provisions and plenty of wine had been stowed in the seat of the carriage; to this reserve her keeper had often resource, and as he devoured with much apparent *gout*, the contents of the well-furnished larder, he was very earnest in his intreaties to induce her to follow his example, and partake of the good cheer, telling her that, without eating and drinking too, she would find but little strength, and poor spirits to fight her way through the world; that starving was the worst nostrum she could apply, to enable her to conquer difficulties.

Isabella felt the full force of these rude arguments; therefore, finding herself exhausted by their rapid manner of travelling, the want of sleep, and agitation of her mind, she consented to his proposal of taking a glass of wine and a sandwich; on which the latter was presented to her, folded in a damask napkin of the finest texture. She was much surprised to find this *bonne bouche*

bouche was composed of ham and chicken, and appeared to have been prepared by a *traiteur*, accustomed to cater for more refined appetites than those of a Sheriff's officer !

This small *trait* was the first circumstance that aroused Isabella, from the supine stupor in which the threats of her brutal companion, and a retrospect of her sorrows, had enveloped her mental faculties from the period of her leaving Newington. The truth now flashed upon her mind, like an electrical shock ; she reflected that they had been on the road nearly two days, and were not yet arrived at the prison that was to inclose her person.

She awaked as from a terrifying dream, to a horrible certainty ; her active mind taught her to expect that a worse fate awaited her at the end of her journey, than a legal durance and its concomitant attendants—want and penury.—She was confirmed in these ideas by perceiving the cloth that wrapped the

sandwiches, was marked with an L. surmounted by a coronet. This brought proof, strong as holy writ, that all her fears would be realized; her sickened fancy no longer doubted into whose hands she had fallen, nor the base purpose for which she had been stolen from her friend and protector!

On this agonizing conviction she mentally exclaimed—"Unprincipled, abandoned Barbara, then this arrest was only a contrivance, a plot of yours, to throw me more effectually into the power of your abominable coadjutor, the infamous Lord Lorimore.—I thank thee, O God! for allowing me to be warned of my danger;—Oh! continue thy sacred protection, and enable me to escape the artful wiles laid to ensnare me; renovate my fragile frame and apprehensive mind with strength and fortitude, to spurn danger, conquer difficulties, and subvert the machinations of my unrelenting sister, and her vile associate!"

After

After this silent appeal to her Creator, she felt re-assured, having resolved to leave no effort untried, to escape the first opportunity that offered, from her wary keeper; she therefore took no notice to him of her suspicions, but expressed a desire to be permitted to let down the windows of the carriage, that she might see the country: for hitherto there had been only a small portion open at the top, merely to ventilate the vehicle. This proposition was positively refused; the man saying they were not far from the place destined for her confinement, where she would have an opportunity of viewing both land and water, and might inhale plenty of air into the bargain.

Though balked in this effort, she was not totally dismayed. When they stopped to change horses, Isabella complained of extreme weariness, and a faint sickness for want of food; the original stock having been long since exhausted by the voracious appetite of her companion. He, who likewise experienced

the imperious calls of hunger, looked forward to the gratification of a hot dinner with eager pleasure; therefore told her, that purely to shew how much he wished to oblige her, they would dine where they then were, it being as good a house as any they should meet with till the end of their travels.

She thanked him for his compliance, hoping at this inn, which appeared to be large and well-frequented, she might encounter some person journeying onward, that would hear her story, and have sufficient humanity to free her from the thralldom of her persecutors. With spirits buoyant by renovated hope, she leaped lightly from the chaise, which, for the first time, she perceived was not a hired one. This only corroborated her fears, and she resolved to inquire of the people at the house in what part of the country she then was, and try if she could not prevail on them to second her efforts; when she would positively insist on being taken before a Magistrate, and refuse

refuse to proceed farther, without the person who detained her could demonstrate his pretensions for such violence.

Whether her artful companion was a disciple of Lavater, and read her intentions in her varying countenance, which occasioned him to distrust her designs, or was more cautious as they advanced nearer the termination of their journey, certain it is, they were no sooner in the court-yard, than he publicly announced to the hostess, that her guest was arrested for the sum of five hundred pounds, and he was employed to lodge her safely in the county jail ; therefore if they listened to any tale she might fabricate, and aided or abetted her to escape, they would make themselves liable to pay the whole sum. To convince them of the fact, he exhibited the writ.

This threat, so opportunely held forth to terrify the ignorant, and preclude the assistance of the mercenary, convinced the trembling, persecuted Isabella she must not flatter herself with any

hopes of assistance from the proprietors of this rustic *auberge*. As she glanced a tearful eye around, in search of one commiserating countenance, it fell on that of an effeminate looking young man, with a blue apron tucked round his waist, and a napkin under his arm, who leant against a door-post, intently perusing a *duodecimo* volume, whose well-thumbed marble cover shewed it had seen service, while his agitated muscles gave evident proof of its moving contents !

The vulgar unfeeling speech of Isabella's jailer appeared to steal him from the contemplation of fancied, to the commiseration of real woes ; when, on beholding the interesting face of the innocent victim of oppression, pallid from fatigue, and bathed in tears of despair and mortification, he started, hurried the book into his bosom, and emphatically exclaimed—

“ Angels and ministers of grace, defend me !—do I hear aright ?—What heavenly

heavenly softness!—who could be deaf to thy plaintive moans?—What obdurate creditor condemned to durance vile thy Sylph-like figure?—Oh niggard Fortune!—ill-fated Edward, why art thou not rich, that thou mightst present thy pocket-book, filled with unreckoned notes, to this charming incognita, to free her from the gripe of yon fell harpy!”

“Harp no harp upon me,” replied the well-fed landlady; “you are getting into your megrims again—you had better mind your own business, you stupid Numps, than trouble yourself about that of your customers. People will have their own, by hook or by crook, therefore it does not *sinify* talking, just like the player folk; so don’t stand *hogling* there, you oaf, but answer the bell in the Granby, for the malicious Officers have been ringing these ten minutes; but you wouldn’t hear, if the clapper was close to your ear, when you

are finishing one of the *catasstrophys* of your confounded romancing nonsense."

A fresh peal now sounding, he was compelled to answer the summons, and departed with a languishing look and a long-drawn sigh.

Shocked at being made the public gaze of every passing ostler, Isabella had entered a parlour whose door stood open, while the talkative dame, addressing the man in office, said—

"You may trust me, Sir, I'll take care to keep all safe, by locking your prisoner into the Wolf and Lamb;—sure bind, sure find, has long been my motto; and then I'll shew your Honour to the Bear!"

"That's right; and bring me a glass of brandy and a bill of fare;—and, d'ye hear, let the young woman have every thing she asks for, but her liberty.—You understand me, dame," nodding significantly.

"Perfectly; let me alone for that—I wasn't born yesterday—I'm up to trap

trap—she'll not talk me over—I'm not to be coaxed out of my senses, or melted by her whimpering. I'm not so far gone in the patheticks as poor sappy-seull Neddy be; he's a mighty tinder-hearted spark—all sympathy, love, and pity, and so forth. I don't know where he got such notions of friendship, and kindness, and justice, and charity—not from *me*, I'm sartin sure;—I believe he bibes these idears from reading the Novel and Romance books—Oh! dear heart, they does a deal of mischief, filling young bodies heads with honour, and generosity, and valour, and such sort of high-flown stuff, that can't belong to poor folk!”

“Why do you permit him,” answered Cerberus, “to fill his mind, and waste his time in sucking in such good-for-nothing trash? which has often turned the heads of his betters before now. We have had Quixotes of all sorts, and I suppose we shall now have a publican Quixote. He will be conceiting him-

self a hero, and imagine it a fine *incident* to assist my imprisoned heroine to make her escape, and saddle you with her debts."

"Don't you be afeard of that, he shan't go near her; if you think she's a slippery one, I'll tend her myself.—Why you must know, Sir, there's what they calls a Circlehating Libary in this place, and I finds there be now one in every village in the kingdom; and they be supplied with the new publications, by the mail, fresh and fresh, from the Leadenhall Pository; for a mort of them be there fabricated! I tells Neddy, I believes to produce such quantities, they have found out an engine, something like that invented in the cotton manufactory; and that they have a Novel, as well as a spinning Jenny."—Here she shook her fat sides, in laughing at what she thought wit.—"But Neddy says, a great many of these here stories are wrote by *Young Ladies*—I'm sartin their mothers might find them better employment

employment to mend their clothes ! It wasn't so in my days ; girls could neither write nor spell then—they only learned to handle their needles ; but now they are always flourishing away with their pens, scribbling verses, up to their elbows in ink, and the deuce of a bit of work do they ever think about ; but they're *cute* enough at invention. I wonders how they can find head to tell so many lies, and manage at the end to bring them so cleverly together !”

“ Pshaw ! nonsense ! What right have parents to expect their children should act better than themselves ?—The daughters only imitate their mamas ; for my friend Foolscap tells me, who is himself one of these poison venders, that there's more old girls that, to use your phrase, spin Novel fustian, by half than young ones. All ages, all sizes, labour at the loom, from the fat Dowager of sixty, to the sensitive Miss of sixteen !”

“ Good

“ Good lack ! good lack ! what will this nation come to ?—I’m quite astounded at what you tells me. It’s all along, I verily think, of these here Sunday Schools, teaching the riff-raff of the parish to read and write : every bumpkin and milk-maid now spend their money in these book shops, and the public-houses are almost forsaken, except by the Soaking Club, who were all born before these new-fangled notions came into fashion. I’m sure this larning will be the ruin of the kingdom.

“ Would you believe it, Sir, that my Neddy is the very head of these here doings. He’s always scuddling in holes and corners to read some of these Ladies Novels ; and there the cub weeps and wails in such a sort, that from a rude, healthy, chubby boy as ever was seen, what with whining and grieving for the misfortunes of them there cattle, that never existed, and staying awake half the night, that he may be certified where

where they get out of their old castles, or underground cellars, or whither north turret tumbles into the river with them, or they jump from the river into the north turret; he does so fag and wherret himself, that he's become such a poor, pale, lanky, weasened creature, that the wind could blow 'en away; and he looks just fit company for one of the ghostes he's so fond of following among the tomb-stones, in his favourite books!

“ I am but a poor, frail widow body, and am afeard must get somebody to manage my concerns, or Neddy will ruin me; for when I complain that, now people read so much, they drink less, he says 'tis all for the best; that the world's enlightened, and they are right to prefer sipping at the *Hellcount* fountain to a draught of mild ale; but I tells 'en if all our customers were to bib nothing but that same *Hellcount*, he would soon go to the devil, and the King's Head be obliged to shut up shop.”

“ Why, according to your account, it has a hopeful landlord.”

“ Ah! you might say so, if you knew all; for when he's got into one of his reading tantrums, he's just like one crazed, and walks up and down the house, with a book in one hand, and a white handkerchief in the other, and every room-bell may ring, it never moves him! The gentlemen of our hunt always meet here once a fortnight, and Neddy being got into one of his freaks, had like to have affronted them all.”

“ Why, what absurdity did he commit? I am curious to hear.”

“ Thus it was: he had just received a *new* Novel from London, and he was so eager about it, that he put the volume on the sideboard, and he read and tended, and tended and read; for he's always like a thing bewitched, to come to the end. Just then the Chairman, Sir Samuel Sulky, called for a glass of Madeira. It was his first coming out
of

of door after a fit of the gout, when he is always murrain cross ; well, as I hope for Heaven, what does Neddy do, but poured him out a bumper of vinegar. Sir Samuel was hot a talking about the election he *lost*, though a had all the Court interest, so a tossed it down his throat before a found the mistake."

"Ha ! ha ! that was a capital blunder.—Did not Sir Samuel break every bone in his skin, or kick him down stairs at least?—I am sure he deserved it."

"No, no, not quite so bad as that neither ; though a was main angry, and tore, and ranted, and swore he would desert the King's Head, and go where there *was* waiters not in heroics ; but I flumped down on my knees, and begged and prayed 'en a would not think of ruining a poor widow ; and Neddy axed pardon, saying he was *habstracted*."

The rest of the company used their interest with Sir Samuel to make him forgive us ; but, by their sneering and
laughing,

laughing, I verily believe they thought it a *good* joke!

“ I am sure it was none to the poor Baronet, for Neddy’s sour sauce kicked up such a hubbub, pinching and griping his poor carcase, that he roared like our town bull; a frightened me out of my wits for fear a should die, for a swore if he did, Neddy should be hanged. A was fain to be carried home to the Manor House, and sent for potecary directly. A did recover to be sure, but a bad bout a had of it. He vowed a should never be able to bear the sight of a marble-covered book again as long as he lived; for sake of the one which occasioned such commotion in his *infernal* region.—Lord love ye, this is not half the pranks I could tell you of my misfortunate boy’s love of story books.”

“ But, my good woman, what I have already heard is full as much as I have either time or patience to attend to at present.”

“ Well,

“ Well, well, I have done, for I never *complains*—I keeps all my trouble to myself—I tells nobody of my unhappiness in having a larned son ; but this I must say, I believe the world’s turned upside down, for children now take upon them to instruct their parents, lecturing and preaching to them about religion, honesty, and justice, and doing their duty toward God and their neighbour, and a mort of such old-fashioned stuff ;—it won’t make the pot boil, as I tells Neddy ; to do that, we must take care of number one, or all this fine palavering won’t take care of us.”

Her auditor, who had long shewn signs of impatience, and made several unsuccessful efforts to escape (for my landlady having seized him by the button, and mounted her gossiping hobby, her career was not easily stopped), driven to the extremity of his endurance, roared out in a voice of thunder—

“ Damn Neddy and his Novels together ; don’t bother me any more with
either,

either, but march off, and get my dinner, for I have forty miles to travel to-night."

At this eventful moment the hero of contention made his appearance; slapping his mother on the shoulder, he interrupted the reply she was going to make, by informing her she must hasten to drop her curtsies to the trio of Justices, who were just hobbling from the Turtle to their carriages, "to eat in dreams the custard of the day."

Neddy, having delivered his message, departed; but his mama, offended that any body should take liberties with her son but herself, could not follow him till she had justified his consequence to her surly guest, by answering him with—

"Marry come up! though I finds fault with Neddy, that's no reason you should; for I believe he's a richer and a better, and I'm sure he's a wiser man than yourself, as he's an *horitor*, and speechifies in the Club, and corresponds with

with your writing folks, and philosophers, and wits, and is making a book himself, that's to be called "The Tremors of Sympathy."

It is impossible to say when she would have stopped, had not Cerberus made his escape. She turned to the parlour where Isabella had been an enforced listener to the foregoing dialogue, then locking the door, and clapping the key in her pocket, she waddled off to pay her respects to the delegates of Justice.



CHAP. XIV.

ISABELLA had been very attentive to the discourse on *Novels* and Neddy ; which in some degree had amused her mind from dwelling too intently on her own forlorn situation. That appearing truly desperate, she meant to watch an opportunity to relate her sad tale to the sympathizing Neddy ; which, from a concatenation of circumstances, bore so near an affinity to the misadventures of the heroines of his favourite studies ; she flattered herself that a mind, humanized and softened by constantly perusing appeals to the susceptible heart, could not refuse to lend his assistance to
liberate

liberate an unfortunate damsel, about to be confined in a *castellated mansion*, and guarded by a watchful dragon of the law.

On a review of her case, Isabella feared that a writ from the Court of King's Bench, a bailiff, a lock-up house, and a prison, were *common* incidents, and every day misfortunes, that occurred to hundreds of unfortunate mortals; therefore were not enough of the marvellous to move the high-wrought susceptibilities of a romantic visionary, to feel for such vulgar sufferings and occurrences, that oppress his species. They were not sufficiently exalted, sublime, astonishing, unnatural, improbable, and *impossible*, to create an interest in the bosom of a lover of Utopian productions; for whose amusement their authors call spirits from the vasty deep; make earth, air, and water change situations, cross over, and figure in, like a Scotch reel!

While Isabella revolved the chances for and against the success of her premeditated

meditated attack on the sensitive Knight of the *auberge*, all her air-built hopes vanished on the appearance of the round shining face of his mama, whose turbid passions and avaricious propensities precluded every hope of success. She entered bearing a dish of fish; a couple of ducks brought up the rear, which, when the bustling hostess had seen properly disposed upon the table, she desired her fair guest to try and make a good dinner; because as how she might not soon get such another in the place where she was a going. Her travelling companion entering, and seating himself, *sans cérémonie*, at the bottom of the table; Isabella perceived she must give up all idea of interesting in her cause the heroic inn-keeper, his place being supplied by a cherry-cheeked damsel.

She resolved to follow the rude, unfeeling advice of the landlady, and try, by eating, to sustain herself, that she might be better able to encounter and subdue those troubles that she expected to

to meet on the termination of her journey, which, from the conversation of her jailer, she found drew near its conclusion.

In the course of their meal, which was passed in perfect taciturnity by Isabella, and vulgar garrulity by her companions, she frequently perceived Neddy walking before the window, in a sort of moody melancholy, with a book in his hand, from which he often stole a look, to cast sorrowful glances at the room that contained the object of his curiosity, the fair incognita!

The ardent soul and heated imagination of the youthful Neddy, panted to perform some chivalric deed, that might rank him high in Novel fame! It had long been the desideratum of his wishes to liberate some distressed damsel from durance; his constant orisons were offered up, that he might be ordained the chosen mortal to snatch some injured fair one from a ruthless jailer, to

counteract the plots of a vile seducer, and after a thousand hair-breadth escapes, restore her immaculate to the embraces of a widowed mother, an affectionate brother, or a distracted lover. These were exploits he ardently wished to perform.

Unfortunately thy enthusiasm, Neddy, in the cause of benevolence, and intentions to circumvent oppression, were defeated by the vigilance of thy mama; who never lost sight, for one moment, of the object of thy tender commiseration, till she assisted her into the chaise that, with four stout horses, thou sawest, with a long-drawn sigh, turn out of the court-yard, and pursue the high road with rapidity! The knight of the blue apron beheld, with pungent regret, the adventurous achievement of rescuing the fair incognita from her persecutors, was reserved for some more fortunate cavalier.

Isabella, who, from the discourse of her companion and the talkative landlady,

lady, was led to suppose that her tedious journey drew near a conclusion, thought only how she should defeat her enemies, and effect her escape. Her suspicions being awakened, she resolved to combat her oppressors with spirit and energy, by not allowing herself to sink into inert despondency, at the moment she was called upon by her situation to exert those mental and acquired powers with which she was eminently gifted; determined to oppose decidedly the artifices, that she must expect would be practised by those, who had thus divided her from the very few friends that would have afforded her protection.

Thus at one instant, while she was bringing her reason to a forcefulness, that should enable her to meet the dreaded future with fortitude, the next she revolved if there was a possibility to turn the present time to any advantage. She naturally supposed her chance of escaping would be much less, when inclosed by the bolts and bars with

which she was threatened, than now, while passing the road in a civilized country ; she could not see any passengers, from the blinds being constantly drawn up above her vision.

For the last two days which they had been travelling, she had heard no carriage pass, but now and then the heavy rumbling of a broad-wheel waggon ; or any passengers, but the voices of drovers that appeared hallooing to the cattle they followed, in tones and a language perfectly new to her ears. From these circumstances she augured but small hopes of escaping from her keeper ; Isabella supposed herself in his Majesty's dominions, but in what part she was yet to learn ; she recollected that the garrulous hostess of the King's Head had boasted of the preference of her accommodations, by announcing the house an English inn ; for though her poor dear Neddy was a native, she was born and bred in Westminster !

Isabella

Isabella was aroused from her reverie by the voice of her travelling companion, by whom she was thus addressed :

“ Pray, my fair charge, may I inquire the nature of that profound study, in which you have appeared immersed for the last half hour?—Peradventure you wererevolving on the disappointment you have just experienced, in not finding an opportunity to impart my cruel inflictions, and claim the potent protection of the seraphic Neddy !”

“ What reason have you, Sir, for supposing I meditated any such application ?”

“ By a sure criterion, the varying changes of your countenance, that never-failing index to the human mind. Such an appeal would have availed you little, had you been permitted to have made it ; that fellow’s shallow brain is literally crazed, and his health destroyed, by poring over those baneful, heterogeneous compositions ycleped Romances, Adventures, Historical Novels, Novels, and *Novellettes* !

“ Having nothing better to do, let us analyze their various ingredients in the crucible of truth ! In the first, the appearance of probability is not even attempted to be preserved ; the authors have only to excite surprise, astonishment, and terror, through the power of supernatural agency ; while the reader, by sacrificing the claims of sense to the delusions of fancy, embodies all the terrific chimeras raised by a vivid imagination, and gives to “ airy nothings a local habitation and a name.”

“ The second is a scion, sprung from the same germ, and may be fairly weighed in the balance of truth and usefulness, with the miraculous accounts given to the world in the Travels of Robinson Crusoe, Philip Quarle, Peter Wilkins, Captain Lemuel Gulliver, Baron Munchausen, and the Hero of Abyssinia !

“ The third, still of the same genus, is composed of such an absurd farrago of real events, and improbable fiction, such a jumble of truth and falsehood, that

that while the taste is gratified, and the imagination amused, poor memory is irreparably injured, and daily commits itself by the most palpable contradictions; the brain being a perfect chaos, occasioned by a mixture of unnatural incongruities, such strange combinations of what has, and what never could have happened, that the bewildered mind cannot sever the chaff from the wheat.

“The fourth and fifth we may descant on together; the latter being only an imbecile twig of the former plant, which lacking both heat and strength, is crude and indigestible. I look upon this species of writing as of a more seductive and deleterious quality, than any other of those publications with which the overloaded press teems!”

“I hope,” replied his astonished auditress, hardly recognising the vulgar bailiff in her present cynical companion, whose conversation proved him well read in men and manners, “that you

exclude satirical attacks on unoffending individuals, and political pamphlets to inflame a nation."

"True; they are equally injurious to society, and ought to be grubbed up, root and branch, and thrown into the fire! I know not why we load with praises, and hold in such high estimation the first inventor of printing. In my humble opinion, the world was much happier before it was known! Knowledge and learning were then more valued and better appreciated; confined to a few individuals, like medals, they derived their consequence from their scarcity;—now any pretender to new-fangled notions finds it so easy to disseminate his opinions, that every man takes it upon him to decide for himself, and "flocks are as wise as their guide." I therefore affirm it is the most pernicious and destructive art that has been handed down to posterity."

"When you make such an avowal, what do you think of gunpowder? which

is

is said to have been discovered by a *religieur*, who surely ought, by his profession, to have inculcated the mild doctrines of peace, whose studies should have been directed to stop the effusion of human blood; yet the disciple of a merciful Master was the first fabricator of those death-dealing particles, that have carried destruction to the uttermost parts of the earth, by instructing us to destroy our species with the greater facility; it has multiplied battles, familiarized us to slaughter, and exacerbated mankind's ambition, thirst for gain, and love of war!"

"I perceive," replied her companion, "you are one of the enlightened females of the eighteenth century;—you have been a reader, and I suppose think yourself sufficiently gifted to confute received opinions of religion, discuss knotty points of law, explore the depths of science, and, by the aid of metaphysical sophistry, plunge boldly into political disquisitions! You can, no
M 5 doubt,

doubt, astronomize, botanize, moralize, and philosophize, dash at every thing to gain publicity; a decided cosmopolite, a pupil of the new school, whose disciples are employed in settling the moral order of things; while their children are slighted, and the family province neglected, their husbands creditors are striking a docket against their goods and chattels!—Dr. Johnson once said, women were to be envied because they could employ their time in hemming a handkerchief; had he lived to this era, he would have been shocked to perceive how very few of his fair countrywomen are inclined to avail themselves of such a sexual privilege.”

Isabella, who felt mortified at his sarcasms, answered—“The sex in general, Sir, are not much indebted to you for your good opinion; and for this ironical attack upon myself, I beg you will accept my particular thanks.”

“Oh! you are very welcome; you made the grievance of which you complain.

plain.—When fair ladies will get out of the latitude prescribed them, and meddle with combustible materials, they must abide the consequence of an explosion. But, by pursuing irrelevant matter, we have wandered far from the original subject, which was the utility of learning to constitute happiness, and the use and abuse of books.—Hear me patiently to an end, and if you are not convinced by my arguments, you shall try to make a proselyte of me, by defending the present mania for reading.”

“I agree to the terms, and beg you will proceed.”

“You no doubt heard what was urged against Novels by the hostess of the King’s Head; though the diction was not elegant, the reasons were forcible, and the arguments conclusive, because their foundation was truth.—There is hardly a ’prentice boy, footman, or servant-maid who is not, by their means, rendered idle, saucy, and

M 6

good-

good-for-nothing, having their heads completely turned by the perusal of such trash!—There is not a Henry, nor a Charles that does not expect to find himself one day acknowledged as a natural, or unnatural son of some noble progenitor; nor a Mary or a Frances, that does not suppose her delectable *agrémens* will so fascinate her master, or her master's heir, that, in defiance of prudence and propriety, she shall be exalted to command in that house, where she had formerly obeyed!

“Thus the minds of our domestics filled with such inflammable gas, are too much in the clouds to descend to the humiliation of performing the menial offices for which they were originally designated by Nature and education; finding themselves balked in their romantic expectations, turned forth to wander, too idle to work, too proud to beg, the male students take the air in an evening on Hounslow, Bagshot, or Blackheath; while the females nightly perambulate the streets, and are added to that immense

mense number of unfortunate, wretched beings, who, according to Mr. Colquhoun's account, already form so considerable a mass of this vast metropolis.

“These are some of the serious evils of Novel reading! I will now give you a few instances of the ridiculous, within my own knowledge. Being one day engaged to dine with a friend, at four o'clock, I was told by him, on my arrival, it would be five, owing to a laughable circumstance that had procrastinated their meal; namely, the butcher's apprentice, that was to bring a leg of mutton, having shouldered it in his tray, willing to lose no time in finishing a favourite Romance, read as he walked; and so absorbed was the knight of the cleaver by his studies, that a prowling marauder, more eager to swallow meat than erudition, levanted with the limb of the wether, which was never missed by the devourer of literature till, on descending the area-steps, the exclamations of the disappointed and enraged

enraged cook, aroused the young son of slaughter from his studious immersion !”

“ This,” replied the laughing Isabella, “ is a very good story, and well calculated to assist your arguments against this species of reading.”

“ It is not the less true for being *comique*. This furor for reading is a growing evil ; the germ is firmly fixed, and it has spread its ramifications around. If the mania was confined to the higher ranks alone, it could not do so much mischief ; but it is an epidemic disease, and pervades every order of the community, from the vender of chandler’s ware, in Broad St. Giles’s, to the more elegant depositories of millinery in the precincts of Bond Street and Pall Mall !— You can hardly visit the shops of either without being convinced, by their repellant looks, that you have disturbed the studies of the young ladies and gentlemen behind the counter !

“ To prove my axiom true ; wanting a pair of gloves, I lately entered one of those

those fashionable repositories, and was served by a pretty sentimental looking girl, whose blue eyes were suffused with tears. On inquiring the cause of her grief, she told me that a very genteel, *fascinating* young man had been there, about an hour before, and desired to look at some silk stockings; she being at the moment deeply engaged with a very interesting scene, in the Victim of Duplicity, he politely begged he might not interrupt her, being in no haste—he would wait till she had concluded the chapter; in the interim, he had found an opportunity to secrete a card of lace, that she had neglected to replace, valued at ten pounds, which Mr. Gouffrée insisted on her paying for; this, to her, was a most calamitous catastrophe!

“ I informed the fair mourner I regretted her loss, but hoped it would ultimately be an advantage; for had she been frilling, puffing, or plaiting, in short acting in her proper occupation, she

she would not now be herself the victim of duplicity ! After measuring me for a few minutes with her eyes, which expressed ineffable contempt, she said—
“ What an unfeeling Hottentot ! your heart must surely be as rigid as your features ; I therefore beg you will take your gloves, and keep your advice for those more inclined to benefit by it than your humble servant ! ”

“ From these, and numerous other incidents I could recite, I think there should be an Act of Parliament against the multiplication of Circulating Libraries, which spring up like mushrooms in all the villages and petty hamlets in the kingdom. From every individual being taught to read and reason, they become eager for information : this is the occasion of all those democratical opinions which have been spread through the kingdom, revolutionizing the minds and manners of the common people. By encouraging their fondness for books, and allowing them the privilege of thinking ;

thinking; plucking away the veil of ignorance that formerly rendered them contented and happy with their lot, you produce remonstrance and disaffection; these ultimately lead to a desire of confusion, a love of anarchy, and a wish for change, which concludes in fostering rebellious principles, subversive of all order in Church and State."

"I have a great inclination to enter the lists with you, though I have not the vanity to flatter myself with making you a proselyte to my ideas; because you are evidently too much wedded to your own opinion to adopt mine."

"Get on, however; for I am desirous to hear what powerful arguments you have to oppose against stubborn facts! I warn you, they must be irrefragable, to have any chance of making me a convert."

"The cause is a good one, were the pleader equal to its support," replied Isabella. "I feel it requires no small portion of courage to take up your gauntlet,

gauntlet, and stand forth the champion of Novel fabricators, against one so strongly fortified by the bulwarks of prejudice and ridicule, to oppose their admirers, who seek amusement and entertainment—dare I finish the triplet by saying instruction, from their perusal !”

“ You are certainly free to assert any thing, if you are equal to produce sufficient reasons to justify your hypothesis.”

“ Allow me then to observe, your virulent attacks upon every species of literature, that are the productions of fancy, taste, and genius, are highly illiberal ; and your inferences unjust. Against modern Novels, in particular, you have hurled your anathemas ; and give them, in my opinion, a false consequence, when you positively avow the doctrines they disseminate are capable of overthrowing Church and State, and shaking mighty empires to their foundation ! In a country like this, where the liberty of the press has been for centuries its
bulwark

bulwark and its boast, it may be easily supposed, in every department of literature, abuses may, and have crept in; and publications, the ephemera of a day, seen the light, that ought not to have emerged from primeval darkness; but they are read, and consigned to merited oblivion, if not made of consequence by being opposed and answered!

“As to Circulating Libraries being prejudicial, I am convinced the contrary is the fact;—that they have enabled the larger mass of the community to read books they could no other way have obtained, is certain; the learned *tomes* of our forefathers, being as firmly fastened in the libraries of the noble and the opulent, as the gold in their strong boxes; and the poor man is equally precluded from the advantages to be derived by knowledge, as he is from the gratifications to be procured by riches! Even according to the account of Neddy’s mother, the lower order of young people, that used to
waste

waste their time and money in sottish idleness, now spend both in rational amusement ;—allowing your inference to be right, that it renders them romantic, is it not better they should rise into fancied heroes, than by drunkenness degenerate into beasts ?

“ In those receptacles, which I aver are of public utility, are to be found the works of many fair authors, and not a few of your own sex, who have exerted their talents, taste, and knowledge of the world, to polish and edify the rising generation ; whose volumes will be ever read with pleasure by those young people, who must feel and acknowledge their obligations, for the instruction they have derived from the religion, morality, honour, and truth they inculcate by precept, and render impressive by example. Under the form of amusement, the mind, left to make its own election, imperceptibly imbibes sentiments of propriety and a love of virtue ; which, perhaps, it never would have received

received from the rigid doctrines of a formal gouvernante, or the dictatorial lessons of a frowning pedagogue.

“ While thus I plead the usefulness of works of imagination, I would not be supposed to mean that there are no exceptions. The Novel plant is of a most prolific genus, and rather multiplies too abundantly for all to be equally good ! The soil being rich, and the demands great, have induced the gardeners to present sometimes a spurious sort to the public. This calls loudly for the pruning knife of Discretion, to lop off the decayed branches, and a careful weeder to clear the ground, that the original root may again flourish.

“ I think I have proved your deductions wrong, therefore cannot allow that the fondness for reading produces misery to the lower orders of society ; not believing with you, that “ ignorance is bliss.” Whether we take a retrospect of times long past, or the occurrences of the present moment, we shall find that the
people

people most ferocious, barbarous, and unmanageable, are those whose minds, uncultured, have not been expanded by learning; who have never felt the vivifying rays of knowledge; whose senses, kept in impervious darkness, have not been taught to claim the privilege of their species, to reason, compare, act, and think for themselves!

“ In this enlightened era, the mists of folly, by the liberality of individuals, are fast dispersing from the visual optics even of the formerly stupid and illiterate! The utility, and the system of intellectual improvement, will evince itself; for the more man understands his incumbent duties, and the claims society has upon him, the better he will perform them. He may be assimilated to an infant the first time he tries his legs to walk: from the novelty of the sensation, he will commit many errors, often stagger, sometimes *fall*; but when after repeated effort, feeling his power, he

he stands firm, erect, and pursues his course steady and assured!

“ This typifies man on his first emancipation from primeval ignorance; he may be liable, in the distraction of the moment, impelled by the novelty of his ideas, to act with more folly than judgment; but when the effervescence of his passions is meliorated by time, the more he feels his consequence in the scale of human beings, and what is expected from him, as an individual, toward the community at large, the better he will perform his part as a worthy member, and a loyal subject!”



CHAP. XV.

ISABELLA had, by the misfortunes of her parents, been devoted to ignorance in the last receptacle of neglected wretchedness—a parish poor-house; she had been saved from it, and taught to read by the kind attention of her first humble friends, and after, by the worthy Curate, instructed how to estimate the gift, by making a proper use of her mental faculties; when residing with her sister, she had dedicated all her leisure hours to study, by which she had improved her understanding, polished her manners, and strengthened her judgment.

Grateful

Grateful for these incalculable advantages she derived from books, she was ever eloquent in their praise ; and, with eager effervescence, defended her favourite thesis—that poverty loses half its sting, when instruction has enabled the victim to extract patience, comfort, hope, and pleasure from the never-failing reservoir of a well-cultivated imagination.

She was, therefore, so far animated by the foregoing subject, that she forgot, in the ebullition of her zeal for literature, the miseries of her present situation, or her fears for the future.—On stopping at the end of her speech to hear her companion's answer, she had the mortification to observe her oratorical powers had taken a very different effect from what vanity led her to expect, having been thrown away upon an inanimate auditor ; he having eat heartily, drank potently, argued furiously, now slept profoundly, and snored sonorously !

As Isabella viewed him in silence, she could not conceive who or what he could be; who, though rough in his manners and appearance, had, within the last hour, thrown off the mask, and convinced her, by his conversation, he was not the personage whom he chose to represent; for his language was good, his remarks pertinent, though satirical; and if his arguments did not bring conviction to a strong mind, they were perfectly calculated to dazzle a weak one! That his heart was bad, there could not be the least doubt, because he was embarked in a cause to betray the innocent, and outrage the laws of society.

Since his character had opened upon her, she saw no hopes of escaping the vigilance of so determined a keeper, whose rigid firmness would never yield to be melted by complaints, which he would laugh at as the romantic wailings of a puling girl, who knew not her own interest. She resolved, therefore,

fore, to make no application to the snarling cynic.

While she revolved this in her mind, it occurred that now was the moment, while her Cerberus profoundly slept, to make one bold effort for liberty ; which might be effected, could she perceive any passenger likely to second the attempt, by making an exertion in the cause of humanity.

At this instant the rapid whirl of a chaise advancing, broke upon the stillness of the air. Determined not to lose the only chance that might occur, she tried to softly let down the front blind, when, to her extreme mortification, she found it was fastened by a secret spring in a manner she could not undo ! In an agony she tried the sides—they were equally secure ; rendered desperate by this disappointment, on hearing the vehicle pass close, she uttered a piercing scream, which roused her slumbering guardian, who instantly clapping one of his hands before her mouth, while

with the other he drew forth a horse-pistol, vowed, with the most horrid execrations, that if she attempted to move or speak again, she should not survive an instant.

The natural love of life, implanted no doubt in our breasts for the wisest purposes, prevailed upon the trembling Isabella; who faithfully promised to allow herself to be conducted to the end of her journey, without making any future attempt at liberation.

“I’ll take care you shall, my slippery Madam; you won’t catch me napping again, depend upon it.—I will not forfeit my veracity, which is pledged to my employers to safely lodge you at Mount Monagan; dead or alive, you shall repose, as Neddy would say, your fair fragile form there this night.—You did not think, pretty one, to deceive the old fox.—No, no, I guessed your intentions of escaping, by your desiring to stop at the inn; and perceived your wishes to pour out your plaintive woes

in

in the ear of the redoubtable champion of the King's Head ; whom, in your romantic ideas, I suppose you took for some Prince in disguise.

“ Had not the old dame defeated your intentions of addressing him, of what use do you think it could have been to you ?—Can you imagine I would have resigned my prize to the thread-paper knight, whom, by one Cornish hug, I could have squeezed into annihilation ?—While you thought me asleep, and was trying the blinds, I was watching your motions ; you see I am not to be imposed upon by such shallow artifices : therefore, unless you wish for worse treatment than I am inclined to give you, submit patiently to your fate ; do not attempt to deceive me, or flatter yourself with the forlorn hope of eluding my watchful vigilance.”

While thus he apostrophized to the weeping Isabella, she saw the inutility of struggling to avoid her destiny, and resolved to wait the conclusion of her

adventure in silence. Whatever place this Mount Monagan might be, to which he avowed he was conveying her, and what treatment she should encounter when there, employed her perturbed thoughts; till nature exhausted with the fatigue of constant travelling for two days and nights, she fell into a profound slumber, from which she awoke not till roused by the voice of her companion, who wished her and himself joy that they were arrived at the end of their eventful journey.

On looking around, she perceived an elderly man with a light, whose reflected rays shewed her a large grey stone building. When handed from the chaise by her companion, she found herself on a drawbridge, the clanking of whose massy chains made her blood thrill with horror; for she now really thought she was going to be immured within the walls of a loathsome prison.

She knew how impotent would be remonstrance or opposition; therefore, in
tearful

tearful silence, followed her conductor, who having opened the door of a large oak parlour, told her he would send a female attendant to her instantly. The gloomy appearance of the room, cold and dispiriting, seemed to chill the vital principle that throbbed at her heart, as she fearfully threw her eyes around; which the feeble gleams of a single candle, placed on a massy marble slab, served to increase, by making "darkness visible."

Had Isabella been as far gone in the regions of Romance as many of her compeers, she might really have fancied herself a heroine of the fifteenth century, chosen to achieve some surprising and wonderful adventure, when, after having eluded the vigilance of her keepers, she would find it incumbent to commence her nightly perambulations. She felt not the magnetic influence of a ghostly director; nor, aided by supernatural courage, was she propelled to explore the sub-

terraneous passages and dungeons of this *castellated* mansion !

Depressed by mental sufferings, exhausted by bodily fatigue, she longed most ardently to repose her aching and weary limbs on a bed, however coarse its texture. Having thrown herself into a chair, she awaited patiently the fiat of her jailers.

A woman, on whose head was shed the snow of above sixty winters, now made her appearance, and desired her to follow, in a language that had so strong a twang of the disciples of St. David, that she concluded herself in the ancient Principality of Wales ! After ascending a number of stone stairs, upon which the dilapidations of Time were very visible, they entered a chamber about fifteen feet square : it was furnished with an old-fashioned bed of coarse brown serge, and chairs covered with the same, too weighty to be moved from their original position by the imbecile efforts of Isabella : an oak table
that

that held a mirror, which had more wood than glass in its composition, proclaiming the habitation and its ornaments were coeval with the birth of their beloved Llewellyn!

Her *Cicerone* informed her that the bed was well aired, and that she would send her some supper. Isabella, whose tears flowed fast as she reconnoitered the dreary abode, in which she believed herself to be immured for the worst of purposes, answered she could not eat; and, with some trouble, made her comprehend she should feel herself grateful for a bason of tea. The old woman nodded assent; and after having lighted a candle that stood ready on the table, which shewed she was an expected guest, departed, locking the door after her, and taking the key.

In despite of all Isabella's well-formed and wise resolutions not to despond, she was sinking fast into morbid melancholy; her sorrows acerbated by a review of the past, the horrors of her

present situation, and the still more dreadful incertitude of the future, she had not moved from the chair on which she had first sat down ; she was thus buried in a profundity of bitter recollections, when her attention was called to a blooming young Welch girl, who entered with a bason of tea, and a capacious plate of toast, which convinced Isabella there was no intention of starving her ! On addressing the attendant, she had the mortification to find she neither spoke nor understood any language but her native tongue. This convinced her that her persecutors had prepared against her making any attempts to move this good-natured looking rustic in her favour ; or even, through her means, to gain information in whose power she was, or in what place confined.

Having, therefore, partaken of what she brought, she made signs to take it away, for that she should go to rest. This was understood by the maid, who retired, not forgetting to observe the locking

locking up ceremony ! Isabella, feeling herself refreshed, began, as is usual with heroines in similar situations, to examine her prison. She could find no sliding panels, nor any door but that by which she entered ; there were two windows, but she was surprised to observe they were not fortified with those iron-bars she had been led to expect ; she was pleased to be enabled to prevent intruders by a massy iron bolt, which having fastened, and placed her candle in the chimney, and recommended herself to the Omnipotent Creator of the universe, whose eye pervadeth all, she retired to her sombre-looking pallet, which was composed of clean, though coarse materials, where, with a conscience free from guile, she enjoyed those refreshing slumbers, which were vainly courted under gilded canopies, on beds of down, by her guilty persecutors !

On awaking in the morning, and looking at her watch, she was surprised

to find it nine o'clock ; renovated by so many hours sound sleep, she arose in better health, and even spirits, than she had experienced since her unjust detention. The vivifying orb of day shone brightly into the room ; its effulgence cheered and re-assured her. On opening the casement, which was placed so high she was obliged to clamber up on one of the massy chairs to take a view of the prospect, she soon perceived the uselessness of fortifying it with iron, as there was no danger of her making an escape by these means ; for she found that part of the building which she occupied, overlooked the sea, whose foaming waves dashed against the base of the rock, on which this ancient tower was erected ; for such its grey stone and clasping ivy proclaimed it to be.

On contemplating the sublime ocean, as the glittering rays of the sun sported on the undulating waves, the brilliant spectacle charmed her aching senses ; and made her almost forget her
isolated

isolated situation, and her additional cause for sorrow, in the conviction that all attempts at emancipation, from that side of her prison, would be fruitless.

While the imagination of Isabella was thus employed, the housekeeper, for so she announced herself to be, entered; telling her she must have slept soundly, for she had been twice at the door before to desire her to come down to breakfast, for the gentleman waited. Supposing this to be her travelling companion, hoping now he had lodged her in security, he might become more communicative, she descended cheerfully; resolved to inquire by whose authority she was detained, and to acquaint him she was not so wholly ignorant as to suppose a person arrested for a debt in England, could be legally conveyed to a prison in Wales!

CHAP. XVI.

FULL of these ideas, Isabella followed her conductress through a spacious gallery; on whose walls frowned many a warlike Chief, armed *cap-à-pie*, intermixed with dames equally fortified with whalebone, who had formerly graced the Courts of our Edwards and Henrys. At its termination, she found herself in a large room, whose furniture, though not modern, was superbly grand.—To her amazement she was met at the door, and handed to the breakfast-table, by the self-exalted, presuming, consequential Mr. Edward Engross!

Before

Before she could recover her surprise, on beholding a being ever disgusting, and now hateful to her sight, he accosted her with all the easy *nonchalance* of a man of high *ton*.

“ Well, my little Bella, how are you? Not the worse, I hope, for your journey. It was cursed tight work, I allow—devilish hilly stages in this mountainous country. *Entre nous*, every thing one sees and hears in this uncultivated tract of his Majesty’s dominions, helps to remind one of their antideluvian ancestors; for they are as ignorant of *l’usage du monde*, as their boasted progenitor Adam, before Eve presented him the pippin of knowledge.

“ Why do you frown, my fair one? Are you not glad to see me?—We have known each other a long time, yet I trust we shall be better acquainted before we part! Here we shall not be interrupted by a jealous-eyed sister, or any other impertinent intruder. In the seclusion of Mount Monagan, I shall have leisure
to.

to devote myself wholly to the fair Isabella.—I shall now thank you for a dish of chocolate, for I feel my ideas will be astonishingly brightened by the exhilarating aid of a good breakfast.”

Isabella, vexed and humiliated by the insolent familiarity of this egregious coxcomb, whom she at once despised and feared, perceiving herself entirely in his power, well knowing he would make no scruple to outrage decency, destroy the bonds of society, and contumeliously trample on all laws, divine and human, to satisfy any detestable passion of his own black heart; was convinced, to accelerate his ambitious pursuits, or gratify his avarice for present advantage, he would, fearless of future consequences, aid his paramour in any vile transaction, if he held out those fascinating baits to lure him to his purpose.

From this retrospective view of his character, she expected not the least

trait

trait of humanity ; being assured nothing she could urge would melt a being hardened in the rigid school of Adversity, whose heart was never softened by the tears of consanguinity, nor throbbled with friendship for one congenial mortal ! In infancy thrown upon public charity, without a kindred bosom to sooth, comfort, instruct, or guide his erring steps, as he advanced in life, he found all the world against him, and his hand was against all the world. Finding no one to love, the affections of his soul became concentrated in himself ! On looking around him, he every where beheld that riches and power were sure to create respect, whoever were their possessors ;—he contemplated them as the grand *panacea* of happiness ; to procure these, he fearlessly sacrificed faith, honour, gratitude, justice, his own approbation, and the world's esteem !

Isabella being determined to know the worst she had to expect from her detention, entered immediately on the subject ;

subject ; telling him she was convinced she was brought there for the worst of purposes ; that the arrest, if it was a real one, had only been applied to as the means of tearing her from the protection of a worthy man, and throwing her into the power of Lord Lorimore, in whose house she now supposed herself to be ;—this convinced her the whole process was illegal, for in Wales, where she now was, she could not be detained by an English writ ; therefore she insisted on being immediately set at liberty, or the vile trio, by whose artifices she was now detained, must prepare to take the consequences, whenever she escaped from thralldom !

While thus spiritedly addressed, Engross shewed some signs of astonishment, wondering where she could have acquired a knowledge of their schemes, which appeared tolerably correct ; for Isabella had spoken as decidedly of what she supposed, as if she had been really assured of the fact. He imagined
his

his emissary had impeached his employer, for he could guess no other means by which she could have derived information that was rather premature, as all his plots were not yet ripe for execution; but never abashed, he answered, with his usual hardihood—

“My pretty Bella, you dazzle me by the brilliance of a new character—you perform a solo so exquisitely, that, when the trio meet, we shall be able to produce a quartett; for you seem to be fully equal to playing the first fiddle, and, as I hope we shall be in unison, I flatter myself with hearing a good concert in this Druidical repository of the archives of his Lordship.”

“Insolent sneerer! most assuredly in any party where you are, they can never be in want of a bass accompaniment.”

“Bravo! witty, upon my soul, as well as musical! Why, child, I wonder how you have acquired all your varied powers of charming. It is really astonishing, considering your origin, and
your

your small opportunities of improvement; but to me, who know you, all this *hauteur* and pompous airs are ridiculous—mighty ridiculous, and, instead of creating respect, only excite laughter!”

“I will not retort your insolent sneers, because it would degrade me in my own opinion, were I to descend to the meanness of making reprisals with so contemptible a mortal; though I will answer your question, by informing you that I am sustained by a conscience void of reproof, a mind exalted by a love of learning, and a heart whose motives are actuated by integrity, gratitude, honour, virtue, and religion.—These are all my possessions; but my pride is supported by an independent spirit, that will not shrink from the exertions of honest industry to acervate its free will, retain its pure principles, and enable it in future to exist without humiliating obligations!”

Having

Having said this with becoming spirit, she arose to depart; but was rudely pulled by Engross into a chair beside him, who being stung to the quick by her pointed and forceful address, though he concealed his mortification under a simulating smile, exclaimed—

“Not so fast, my high-souled heroine; you must really descend from your altitudes, and deign to hear a little mere matter of fact conversation, which nearly concerns your High Mightiness! Yet before I open my commission, and you enter on your trial, let us kiss, and be friends.” Saying this, he snatched her in his arms, and in spite of all her struggles and screams, which no one attended to, having kissed her half a dozen times, he reseated her, saying—“You see, if I chuse to exert myself, you are nothing in my hands; so let me recommend it to you never again to oppose your strength to mine, or defy my power, that at Mount Monagan is absolute.—

If

If you doubt the assertion, I will produce my credentials."

"Unhappy, lost, devoted Isabella!" exclaimed the terrified girl; who, drowned in tears, now perceived the folly of provoking a determined villain, whose ruthless heart was stung by her scorn; and, enraged by her reproaches, would therefore unfeelingly gratify every base propensity of his callous nature.

"Bless me, what a fuss is here about a simple salute;—I fancy you did not coy it thus with your seafaring spark, when you shewed yourself so ready to receive his offers, throw yourself into his arms, and consent to marry after a courtship of not six weeks! Pray, my pouting fair one, tell me if that was quite in unison with your refined notions of modest, delicate sensations?"

Isabella was too absorbed in sorrow to answer her taunting tormentor, and he proceeded.

"What another change, from skittish to sulky!—be it so, my little filly; I suppose,

suppose, before you and I part, I shall understand all your paces. I will proceed, however, to speak to my brief, on the supposition that you know, my pretty culprit, the punishment assigned to those stubborn spirits who will not plead to the indictment, is to be pressed till they do !”

Here he threw his arms around his frightened prisoner, who agonized by the dread of what further insults she might be exposed to suffer from this lawless assassin of virtue and honour, her senses forsook her, and she dropped from the chair in all appearance dead.

When Isabella was recovered enough to recollect her deserted, forlorn, and miserable condition, she found herself laid on a couch, the housekeeper and her helpmate, Jane, burning feathers, and rubbing her hands and temples with potent volatiles ; while the cause of her sufferings, the detestable Engross, leaned against the chimney, watching the slow return of animation
in

in the pâle countenance of the miserable object of his persecutions, as if fearful death should rob him of his destined prey!

As soon as she was restored sufficiently to reflect on her situation, a flood of tears in some measure relieved her bosom from its oppressive weight of woe. She shuddered involuntarily at the sight of Engross; to avoid him, she desired to be shewn to her room, for finding herself extremely ill, she wished to lay down. This request being acceded to by a nod from her tyrant, she was, by Jane, assisted to her chamber; he telling her he should expect she would meet him at dinner in a better humour.

Isabella, stretched on her bed, had full time to revolve over the horrors of her present situation. She still supposed herself confined at a seat of Lord Lorimore's, brought thither through the artifices of her unnatural sister, to place her totally in the power of
of

of this hoary seducer. She could easily believe the unprincipled Engross might be employed as an active agent in this arrangement; that he would make no scruples to act as pander to a man of his Lordship's riches, power, and patronage. All this she could comprehend; but what did he mean by his licentious conversation, the undue liberties he had taken with her person—what, but that he must have views of his own, that were perfectly irrelevant to the purposes he was sent by his employer to execute!

From the specimen he had that morning given of his audacity, she thought with horror to what insults she might have been subjected, while terror had driven Reason from her seat. Isabella saw that she had done wrong to irritate, by her tart replies, so vindictive a mortal, giving him an excuse to affront her; convinced there are cases in which it is necessary to oppose hypocrisy by deception; that candour of

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heart and ingenuousness of disposition, were not proper weapons to combat with effect against the subterfuges, stratagems, and deep-laid schemes of artful villany "labouring for its purpose."

At length convinced of the necessity, she resolved to simulate, and keep her enemy at bay by a little political management, that by silently attending to the explication of his present intentions, she might be the better enabled to defeat his future plans. Isabella perceived the folly of provoking insult by acerbity towards Engross; when, perhaps, by a contrary behaviour, she might procrastinate her fate, till some fortunate moment offered to effect an escape from the persecutions of her enemies.

On the idea that a project well planned is half executed, *hope* again revisited its deserted mansion in the bosom of Isabella. Her nerves regained a firmer tone, and her spirits were exhilarated by the welcome return of a companion,

panion, in whose absence wretched mortals commit themselves to despondency, invoke annihilation, and plunge uncalled into eternity!!

We earnestly recommend to the suffering children of Misfortune, in the direst moment of distress, never to allow the fiend Despair to drive the consolatory goddess, Hope, from the situation she is assigned by a merciful God, in the breast of all his creatures, to intenerate the turbid, elevate the depressed, and re-illumine, by her magnetic vivifying influence, the doubting sceptic!



CHAP. XVII.

ISABELLA having reasoned herself into a frame of mind to meet Engross with calmness, and to hear, with fortitude a *développement* of what she was in future to expect from the artful machinations of her foes, on being summoned to attend him at dinner, entered the eating-room with a serious, though firm demeanour. On her appearance her tormentor exclaimed—

“Variable charmer, heroics were the order of the morning; at noon they sink into a gentle dying melancholy; in the evening, I flatter myself, you will assume the delectable form of tenderyielding love!

Let

Let me not, in the furor of my admiration at your versatile powers of pleasing, forget to perform decorously the honours of Mount Monagan to its fair visitant. Cannot you suppose me your favourite Sir Charles Grandison, and permit me to hand you to the head of the table?" advancing at the same time most ceremoniously, with the utmost rigidity of features, and pomposity of carriage!

The eyes of Isabella expressed the ineffable contempt which she felt for the coxcomb, though she would not permit her lips to impart it. His intuitive perception soon enabled him to translate her looks, and he replied with promptness—

"Oh! I understand your glances; you do not conceive me worthy to personify the chaste Sir Charles. Well then, thus let it be; suppose yourself the persecuted Pamela, your humble servant the naughty Squire Booby; this," pointing to the grinning house-keeper,

keeper, "the vile Jewkes, and," chucking Jane under the chin, "this rose of Taffy land, the wicked Nan. You perceive, fair lady, I understand the works of Richardson a little; they were lent me, for my edification, by the lady of the Right Worshipful Justice Shark, to teach me, as she observed, "good and virtuous principles;" I suppose she meant by perusing the amours of a Lovelace; he was a "fellow of infinite humour," had some spunk, a great deal of invention. I did as you ladies do, skimmed the cream of his exploits, and—— But here comes the dinner; shall I trouble you to carve the fowls, while I cut up the ham? for the keen air of the Welch mountains has whetted my appetite with a vengeance, and I prognosticate I shall devour most voraciously.

"I earnestly recommend it to you, my little Bella, to try and pick a bit; though I am conscious it is against all rule for a persecuted heroine either to
eat,

eat, drink, or sleep; they being, I suppose, supernaturally sustained for weeks, months, nay for years, without requiring any of those adventitious aids so necessary and natural, for the comfort, support, and sustenance of mere men and women!"

Thus ran on Engross, as if his satirical sneers on what he deemed Isabella's romantic propensities, gave a zest to the well-dressed viands, to which, as he had threatened, he did much honour. His companion allowed him to proceed without interruption; he called on her to drink a glass of wine, on her civilly refusing, saying she preferred water, this gave him another opportunity for raillery.

"Oh! I understand, you are afraid some deleterious or soporiferous drug is mixed with the vinous beverage, to close your pretty eyes in deathlike slumbers! Depend on my honour, there will be no such interesting Novel incident, to heighten the *dénouement* of the marvellous

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vellous adventures of the virtuous Isabei and the valorous Edward ! To convince you what I dare do, I dare justify, and that I am above descending to such sort of every day deception, you shall see me swallow a couple of glasses out of the decanter ; and old Hollyhock here, and the Mountain Daisy, shall each pledge me ! I hope this will serve to banish your delicate doubts of the present, and give you more confidence in the future !”

Isabella, who felt conscious that her thoughts had really reverted to the tricks of which she had so often read, coloured deeply as he announced the fact ; and hardly knowing what she did, instinctively poured out some wine, and bowing to him, drank it off, while he cried—

“ Bravissimo ! I love to see prejudice overcome, and error conquered.— I perceive I shall make something of you in time.”

Thus,

Thus, in idle impertinence on his part, passed their meal, and almost total silence on her's, till the cloth being drawn, and the *dessert* placed on the table, she was thus addressed by Engross—

“ You appear, *ma belle Ange*, not to be in so peccant a humour as you was at our *déjeuner* ; if, therefore, you are inclined to listen soberly to a rational conversation, without your passions being in *alt*, or treating me with a faint, I will, to preclude the necessity of a mysterious warning, unravel the clue to all those intricacies, by which you conceive yourself environed. . In doing so, I shall convince you I am more inclined to be your friend than enemy ; and it will totally depend on your own behaviour, in which light you are to view me in future !”

Isabella, not daring to trust herself to answer him, bowed a silent acquiescence, and he went on.

“ I will now enter upon the proceedings;—but first I’ll drink your health in a bumper of old Lory’s best Burgundy ; for I agree with the Poet—

“ Wine whets the wit, improves its native force,

“ And gives a pleasant flavour to discourse.”

“ I mean to come directly to the point, for I am fond of brevity—’tis the soul of business !”

“ Is that,” asked Isabella, “ the general sentiment that actuates the gentlemen of your profession ; or is it a singular *trait* in your own character ?”

“ I perceive Nature will prevail, and you, my dear Bella, can no more refrain from being witty, when an opportunity offers, than I from paying my oblations to Bacchus, when good wine is placed before me. So here goes, my little sparkler,” filling his glass ; “ I’ll give you a sentiment :—

“ Here’s all that we love, and all that love us, and the devil take the remainder !”

He

He now pressed Isabella to follow his example ; this she positively declined, waiting in dreadful suspense for him to proceed, while he seemed to be acquiring courage to plead his cause, by frequent application to the bottle ! At this instant Jane entered with a parcel of letters ; one of them announced the consequence of the writer by its heraldic cement ! Having eagerly tore it open, Isabella watched his changing countenance, while he frowned over its contents. Depositing it in his pocket, he ran his scowling eye over several others, that with a 'pshaw ! he committed to the flames.

The last of the number shewed, by the stiffness of its direction, vulgar formation, and the wafer seal, its scribe was of that order of beings, yeled an attorney's clerk. The perusal of this threw him into a most violent passion ; he strode up and down the room, crushed it in his clenched fist, and swore between his shut teeth, he would not be

cheated out of his just due by a sucking Lordling's pleading his nonage! He was resolved to have the tenor of his bond, nor would he abate a particle of his demand, while the roof of Westminster Hall covered a court of law.

Having exhausted his rage in a wordy war, he renovated his spirits with a half-pint bumper; which Isabella trembled as she saw him swallow, convinced that he was already verging on a state of inebriation, dreading what insults she might be exposed to, suffer from such an unprincipled brute, when his passions, maddened by intoxication, would spurn the controul of reason. While these thoughts filled her with horror, throwing himself into a chair, he thus addressed her—

“ You look frightened, child—be comforted; I am not angry with you; but I have received some cursed accounts from my clerk about a disagreeable business. I must return to London immediately; therefore, without any unnecessary

unnecessary circumlocution, I mean to inform you how matters are situated respecting your present, and future prospects. I have before told you, if it is not your own fault, you may be rich, respectable, virtuous, and happy !”

Isabella looked sceptical, and he proceeded.

“ I have no time to spare in combating prejudices, but shall be as concise as the nature of what I have to propose will admit ; and all I claim from you is a patient hearing. The passion Lord Lorimore supposed himself to feel for you, the encouragement it met from your sister, and the offers he made to win you to compliance, are no secrets to yourself ; I therefore need not dwell on them. After you thought fit, in your virtuous furor, to levant with Goody Hunt, and accept the offers of that Scotch vagabond, Stuart, intending to marry a beggar ; disgracing by such an alliance, that self-exalted *illustrissima*, Mrs. Stormer, whose head spins like a tetotum.

tetotum at the idea of encircling her brows with a coronet, through the dotting imbecility of her paramour——”

Here he interrupted himself by a sarcastic laugh, which having indulged some time, he then proceeded.

“As soon as this mortifying intelligence, so derogatory to her soaring ambition, reached the House of Orpington, its mistress was quite uproarious;—balked in her plans of rendering her family *notorious* by noble connections, she was “wild as the Priestess of the Delphic God;” for when she turned you out of doors, it was only with the intention of frightening you into an acceptance of his Lordship’s splendid offers. She had spies, that made her acquainted with your most minute actions; and, thanks to Goody Hunt’s lack of retention, and love of gossiping, nothing ever talked of before her, was a secret to her neighbours!

“It was, therefore, very easy to circumvent such shallow contrivers. His

Lordship.

Lordship and myself being called to counsel, it was agreed that you should be lulled into security, and allowed to proceed in your own schemes to the last moment, even unto the church door.— I advised your sister to swear a debt against you of five hundred pounds, for board, education, and clothes.— You start, my dear girl, but attend—that was a *coup de main*; I, as you shall hear, played a double game. The writ was executed, a scuffle ensued;—for this we were prepared; it was expected the North Briton would take an active part; a carriage was to be in waiting, while Sandford, one of the abettors of his Lordship's private vices, was to watch his opportunity to carry off the fair bride. Nay, frown not—I exult in my plot, because it has succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations; and here you are, my adorable girl, safe and secure at Mount Monagan.”

Isabella's overcharged heart, throbbing with agony at this dreadful recital

recital of her enemies machinations, from whose persecutions she saw no power of appeal, now relieved itself by torrents of bitter tears; she determined not again to interrupt him till she had heard what were their future intentions respecting her, that, by seeing the whole of her misfortunes at one view, she might form her plans of circumvention accordingly.

After Engross had again fortified his spirits with his favourite Burgundy, he resumed the conversation.

“Now, my dear Bella, you don’t conceive that I came this long, stupid journey to Taffy land, merely to give you the meeting, and oblige my colleagues: no, no, my pretty blue-eyed puritan, I was actuated in my travels by what every wise man should be—self-gratification! It is my axiom, that the being who neglects his own interest, when an opportunity offers to promote it, deserves to be buffeted by Poverty for the remainder of his existence!—

Fortune is a blind goddess, and being a female, requires a little gentle force to plead as an excuse for conferring her favours ! I have boldly attacked and conquered the coy jade, and am now one of her greatest favourites."

Isabella, whose impatience to be made acquainted with the full extent of her miseries could no longer be controuled by the cold dictates of prudence, interrupted the insolent braggart with—

"Give me leave to ask what I have ever done to you, Sir, to justify the cruelty of your conduct toward me at the present moment ; in which you avow having planned and executed the most atrocious deeds against my honour, happiness, and liberty ; and, with unblushing front, announce yourself my most inveterate persecutor, leagued with my enemies for my destruction. But I defy your malice, and that of your coadjutors, trusting in that Being who protects the innocent, that I shall
be

be enabled to escape from the artifices of so abominable a triumvirate."

"I humbly thank you, Miss Nelson, for putting me into such good company; but, if you will condescend to listen unto the end, you will find I am more inclined to be your slave, than your jailer. I have long admired you; you have been the object of my ardent aspirations, even while you lived with Parson Norman; and used to appear in the church-yard, dressed in your Sunday finery, so neat and primitive in your cotton gown, round-eared cap, and peasant's bonnet; I thought you the prettiest little rustic in three parishes. But what was to be done—you the Curate's maid, and I clerk to the Justice! If then I had encouraged the flame that filled my bosom, and avowed my passion, most probably we should have married, like the surrounding herd, and vegetated in the village of Lenthill till we returned to the dust from whence we sprang!

"Even

“Even almighty Love could not reconcile me to those grovelling ideas; though “ hedge delivered by a drab,” my aspiring mind convinces me I owe my existence to some great man; perhaps I may claim kindred by blood, though not in law, with a renowned General, a Prime Minister, or a Lord Chancellor! Most certain it is, I have as daring courage as the first; am as ardent, aspiring, and ambitious as the second; and have law knowledge, perseverance, and industry sufficient for the third of those illustrious characters!

“ Thus having a competent idea of my natural rights, to make a conspicuous figure on the great stage of the world—though feeling I was deserted by every relative, without a name, unfriended, and forlorn, to find my own place on a globe, of which I could not claim a single particle, yet I was not depressed; my aspiring soul buoyed me up to oppose myself to the existing
circum-

circumstances of my birth, for which I was blameless.

“ I felt proudly conscious the man who boldly snatches by his own exertions a wreath from Fame, is a more valuable member of society, and ought to be more honoured than him who sits down supine and contented, with the reflected dignity of laurelled heroes, and titles derived from his ancestors, without any effort from himself ! I exclaimed with the unfortunate Savage, in his Bastard—

“ He lives to build, not boast a generous race ;

“ No tenth transmitter of a foolish face.

“ His daring hope no sire's example bounds,

“ His first-born lights no prejudice confounds.”

“ I resolved to emerge from dependence on the bloated consequence, purse-proud insolence, low chicanery, and dirty speculation of the Right Worshipful Justice Shark ; shake off the trammels of constraint, and soar at nobler game.

game. To the metropolis I looked forward, as the only mart for talents such as mine to seek advancement ! I flattered myself that, on some future day, my persevering industry would procure me a seat in the Legislature of my country ;—for this my heart ardently panted—this enviable distinction was the *summum bonum* of my hopes ! To prepare for this elevation, I tried my unfledged powers of oratory in the village junto of politicians, assembled at the Bull's Head ; where the boldness of my assertions, the flowers of my rhetoric, and the ardour of my declamation, procured me a fraternal embrace from the President ; I was permitted the honour of the sitting, and voted to have deserved well of my country !

“ My heated imagination was in this state of effervescence, when Fate introduced me to Mrs. Stormer ; her successful perambulations in pursuit of wealth and consequence, roused every latent particle of pride in my composition,

sition, and urged me on to follow her great example. She was at that time a fine woman ; her attentions flattered my vanity, her praises lifted me into self-consequence, and her promised patronage determined me to emerge from village durance, and push my fortune in London !

“ I am not ungrateful, therefore must acknowledge it was through the introduction of your sister I first got footing in the houses of the great and powerful. This was all I wanted ; my talents soon made me popular, and my usefulness in supplying the wants of the indigent, occasioned me to be followed, and my society solicited by the unfortunate and improvident ; to whom the acquaintance of a money lender is at once necessary and destructive ; who, while he relieves the exigencies of the present moment, avails himself of their distress, and revels in their spoils for life !

“ Do

“Do not shudder, child, because I tell you the “secrets of our prison house;” we don’t always proclaim them aloud, though I doubt not they are pretty well understood, through the interposition of a few miserly old fathers, and impertinent guardians; who have lately thought fit to make us produce, in the Court of King’s Bench, the security procured from their unfledged sons, and hopeful wards. But we manage to get through it, thanks to the chicanery, subterfuges, and glorious uncertainty of the laws!

“Now, having cleared up all the mysterious proceedings, I am verging to the point, my little blue-eyed audtress, in which you are principally concerned; for I perceive, by your eager glances, how desirous you are for the catastrophe of my history, which I foresee, like your favourite heroes of Novel memory, must end in matrimony!

“Lord

“ Lord Lorimore, whose sickly appetite is ever seeking gratification in variety, whose pride was mortified that you should slight his consequence, despise his offered splendors, and prefer poverty with a young Scotchman, swore that, cost him what it might, he would possess your person ! For this he entered into all our plans, and closed with the enraged Barbara’s proposal, which was to receive from him the five hundred pounds, that she had made you her debtor. For this *douceur* she was to yield you into the power of his Lordship ;—so enraged is this tender sister against you, for what she denominates slighting her advice to aid your *proper* establishment, that she now avers her only wish is to see you humbled ; and your insolent boast of persevering in virtuous principles, rendered null and void !

“ Mrs. Stormer having told Lord Lorimore your brains were turned with Romance reading, that you would
conceit

conceit yourself a heroine in a Novel, and would put into practice all the plans you had perused to escape him, if he did not counteract this, by robbing you of the power ; to do this effectually, you were brought to Mount Monagan, a seat that his Lordship inherits from his maternal grandmother. Here he has long been in the habits of sending all his skittish fillies to grass, where they are soon reduced to order by proper management.

“ He formerly used to visit this mountainous ruin, to shoot grouse, but now only makes it his nursery for refractory fair ones ; therefore keeps up no establishment but Mrs. Ap-Gwynneth, the self-denominated housekeeper, and her husband, who officiates as gardener. The old girl is perfectly at the devotion of his Lordship ; she is allowed a young assistant, who is always like the present, chosen from the Welch peasants, and cannot speak one word of English.

“As you were supposed to be more artful than your contemporaries, and more able to elude the vigilance of your keeper ; I was solicited to give you the meeting, and attend to your security till it suited his Lordship to pay his personal respects, as he then expected matters of high importance to the State would preclude him from that happiness for another fortnight ; but, by a letter that I have just received, I find he will be here in a couple of days. It is therefore necessary for me to be explicit in my intentions, and you prompt in your resolves.

“After some political demurs as to the proposed journey to Wales, and some well-managed rejoinders to the Peer’s arguments, I agreed to undertake the hazardous and disagreeable employment of becoming your jailer, on being permitted to name my own conditions : those were, that his Lordship should immediately bring me into Parliament for one of his boroughs !

“Unused

“ Unused to let trifles balk his passions, two of which were now to be gratified—love and revenge, Lord Lorraine closed with my terms, by making one of his venal Representatives accept the Chiltern Hundreds!—In consequence of this arrangement, I obtained the first wish of my heart, and you behold a Member for the ancient and respectable Borough of Braywell! Having taken my seat at St. Stephen’s, where I was received with contemptuous sneers, and frowns of disapprobation, by the opulent and independent party, from these I turned to a very different genus, whose principles I knew, whose wants I had assisted; by them I was greeted with smiles of approbation, recognized by nods of familiarity, and my hand pressed with the fervour of welcome. I was not too much elated by this appearance of urbanity, well knowing how properly to estimate the sycophantic grin of those whom distress had made

humble ; improvident spendthrifts, the heirs of dissipated depravity, the slaves of luxury, the dependant tools of power ; who were as regardless of the national honour, as careless of the prosperity of their country, as they had ever shewn themselves to be of their own possessions !

“ This Parliamentary point settled to my satisfaction, I prepared for my journey to Mount Monagan, though not exactly with the same views and intentions as were supposed by his Lordship ;—we are both men of the world ; self-gratification was our end and aim, therefore it was *ruse contre ruse*. This is my plan, in which if you have sense and prudence enough to coalesce, it will enable you to take a great revenge on your unnatural sister, and your antiquated adorer, by turning all their schemes against you to their own confusion ! It will preserve that virtue on which you justly set so high a value ;
for

for I am, for the love I bear the charming Isabella, willing to become a Benedict, and consent to the thralldom of matrimony ; always your admirer, I offer myself to you in the character of a husband ! Speedy must be your determination, for the enemy is almost at our gates. Though time presses, a Welch parson will soon tack us together, *sans cérémonie.*



CHAP. XVIII.

ISABELLA, who had with the utmost impatience heard him thus far, mortified by his undaunted assurance, provoked by his impertinent *nonchalance*, which he exhibited in supposing she would, with all due humility, receive with joy the superlative honour of his hand, was going to interrupt him with a positive refusal, when he said—

“Stop, my pretty Bella; speak not, though it were to give consent, till you hear all I have to offer.

“When his Lordship arrives, and prefers his amorous suit, you must decisively reject him, and all the gilded

baits

baits that he will throw out to lure you into the toils. Provoked at your temerity, vexed at your scorn, and convinced that he has it in his power to command those attentions, enforce those indulgencies he has condescended to solicit, he will make no ceremony of employing a little gentle force, where persuasion has been of no avail.

“ Without any suspicion of our consanguinity, I shall doubtless be made the depositary of his coercive intentions, and thus enabled to circumvent them! You may, therefore, trust that I shall hold myself in readiness to appear in proper time to save both your virtue, and my honour; when, attended by witnesses, I claim you as my wife, the deceived Peer, thus outwitted, will be obliged to relinquish the pursuit, and consent to come down a pretty large sum, to stop the clamours of an injured husband; for he dares not abide the *hoax* of his noble colleagues in sin, the furious reproaches of his Laurina, or the

award of the Court of King's Bench, who would assuredly give me swinging damages, as it would make the third time of his name being registered in the archives of Doctors Commons, for such high crimes and misdemeanours ; thereby adding celebrity, by his puissant name, to the increasing catalogue of most noble and right honourable seducers !

“ You have now before you the whole of my past, present, and future intentions. Whatever duplicity I have thought proper to use with the world, in my confessions to you I have been candid and sincere. I allow some subterfuges were practised to bring you to Mount Monagan ; the necessity of mystery no longer existing, I have generously withdrawn the veil, and clearly explained in my narrative, all that appeared ambiguous in your enforced journey.

“ From this place, by the well-formed plans of your enemies, you can never escape but by my assistance ;
therefore

therefore make your instant election, whether you will become the mistress of the doting Lord Lorimore, confined in this old castle, devoted solely to the gratification of his pleasures, till the novelty being worn away, tired of your person, you will be turned forth upon the world, adding one more to the numerous herd of seduced, neglected, and deserted females, who have been accused of the heinous crime "of outliving his liking."

"View the contrary side of the prospect. By closing with my proposals, and accepting me for your *caro sposo*, you will revel in the plenitude of riches, consequence, and power; will glitter in the hemisphere of beauty; the envy of the women, the admiration of the men! From my knowledge of existing manners, I can take upon me to avow, that those beings who form the circles of fashion, and are denominated the great world, will never trouble themselves to inquire into the pedigree of

your ancestors, or the resources from whence you have derived your present opulence; while they perceive you content to lavish your wealth on *dejeûnés*, *fêtes*, and masquerades for their amusement; and while they nickname you the *new woman*, they will sedulously court your acquaintance, partake of your follies, exclaim at your extravagance, and exert themselves to the utmost to hasten your destruction; that the aspiring reptile may the sooner return to its original insignificance!

“ But let not my charming Bella fear that will ever be our case. I live by the extravagance of the age, and am tolerably warm already; have secured a seat in Parliament for five years, which I mean not to doze away inactively. It is my intention to render myself too useful to those in power, to have my services dispensed with at the end of the campaign; and who shall say, among the motley list of new creations, you may not one day see gazetted,

“ Lord

“Lord Engross, Baron Lenthill, of Lenthill, &c. &c.” Does not your little heart throb at the idea of your Ladyship?”

“No,” replied Isabella, “I should feel honours, derived from such a source, an abasement! My heart experiences no sensation but horror, at the tissue of artful deceptions you have presented to its view—anger and scorn, at your supposing for a moment that I would condescend to aid your nefarious projects, your aspiring ambition, your vile artifices, by becoming an accomplice in your crimes, and accepting you as a husband! Be assured, repugnance, contempt, and detestation are all my breast can ever experience for you, till it ceases to beat.”

“Very well, Madam; you insult my lenity, reject my love, and spurn my generous, disinterested offers; proudly and positively refusing to accept the honour of my hand and fortune.—Do I

read you right, that you will not be my wife?"

"You are perfectly correct, I never will;—no threats shall intimidate, no blandishments persuade me to unite myself to a being, however rich, powerful, or exalted, that my honest soul despises! Lord Lorimore shall be made acquainted with the rectitude of his steward's intentions, with what devotedness to his interest he has repaid his patronage.

"Here I am determined to abide his arrival, when, I doubt not, he will liberate me from an unjust confinement; for I will not believe he dares to outrage those laws he is bound to protect, by committing the violence you threaten on the affianced wife of a subject of this realm! Mr. Stuart, I am well convinced, will not rest till he has traced out the dark plots to which I have been sacrificed, and called the atrocious perpetrators to a serious account."

"If

“If such are your expectations, you will find yourself deceived: the Scottish Wanderer is taken good care of, far removed from the hearing of your complaints, and an effectual stop put to his impertinent interference; therefore your hopes, from the courage of your nautical hero, you will find as fallacious as those formed on the rectitude, honour, and self-forbearance of the owner of Mount Monagan. The qualities of retention of this place give me leave to enumerate. It is reared on a high hill, fortified by ramparts, and a deep *fosse* on the land side, impassable but by a ponderous portcullis, that will never at your order be lowered;—the other part of this castelated dwelling, in which stands the turret you occupy, overlooks the ocean, whose billows lave the rock on which its site is reared. The lover therefore who attempts your liberation, must visit you in a montgolfier!”

This dreadful account of the difficulties with which she was environed,
was

was delivered with a Sardonie grin, and in the most taunting accents, by her persecutor; who, flushed with the wine he had swallowed, stung by her bitter reproofs and proud refusal, his countenance exhibited a prototype of all the bad propensities of his nature, struggling for mastery! Her eye fell under his frenzied glances, her lately assumed courage sunk, and tears of extreme agony and bitter distress, deluged her cheeks.

Engross, who had been pacing the room, stopped and viewed her a few minutes with a triumph truly Satanic; when catching her in his arms, he exclaimed—

“Froward, incorrigible, insulting girl! you have roused the sleeping lion, and shall pay the price of your temerity. I would have made you mine, legally mine—have laid my hard-earned honours and fortune at your feet;—you have despised the gift, and spurned the giver. Now then, even this moment, will I
revel

revel in those charms you estimate so highly, without paying the price; then, my haughty fair one, it will be your turn to sue for that hand, as a favour, if you have so scornfully rejected."

The fragile form of the terrified Isabella was nothing in the rude gripe of this athletic Satyr, who, in despite of her struggles and resistance, proceeded to take the most unwarrantable liberties. The victim of his power now gave herself up for lost, while she rent the air with her shrieks. To those he paid little attention, fearless of interruption, well knowing the female domestics were gone to a christening some miles distant; and his own man was left in charge of the drawbridge, of course he was out of hearing! The same conscious security that made him bold, had prevented his fastening the door, which at this eventful moment was thrown open, and presented to the astonished eyes of the enraged and disappointed Engross, and the almost exhausted, fainting Isabella, a hand-

a handsome, elegant young man, in a shooting dress, with a fowling-piece in his hand.

He advanced into the middle of the room with a firm step, and with a haughty and commanding air, addressed himself to the crest-fallen, discomfited Member of Braywell!

“ Sir, I make no apology for my abrupt appearance; the cries of a female in distress are a sufficient excuse for the present intrusion, and I shall ever esteem it a happy circumstance in my life if my opportune arrival has rescued this lady from that violence and outrage, to which she has evidently been exposed.”

This speech occasioned the blushing Isabella to recollect the appearance she must exhibit to the compassionate stranger; and while she endeavoured to decently adjust her clothes, torn in the struggle she had made to liberate herself from the fell gripe of her base assassin, Engross thus addressed the unwelcome visiter—

“ Sir,

“Sir, I know not by what means you have made a forcible entry into Mount Monagan, or by what pretensions you mean to justify breaking into the house of a Nobleman, *vi et armis*; and invading the privacy of a man and his wife, who are his friends and guests?”

“In answer,” replied the youth, “to the first part of your question, being upon a visit in this neighbourhood, I had strolled out with my dogs; a young pointer, pursuing the scent, had crossed the *fosse*, through a gap made by Time, nearly opposite these windows; not being able to call him back, I followed, when screams, which I took for those of extreme distress, arrested my steps. They continued; guided by the sound, I entered this room. If the lady avows herself your wife, I shall most readily ask pardon of both for my intrusion; if, on the contrary, as every appearance warrants the conjecture, you have no legal claims, and I have had the pleasure
of

of preserving her from present insult, she may command my future services."

This speech was delivered by the interesting stranger in a manly, impressive voice, and a determined manner.

Isabella, who looked upon him as her good genius sent to save and protect her, dreading being again left in the power of Engross, threw herself at the feet of her deliverer; entreating him to take her from that place, where, inveigled from her friends, she had been brought for the worst of purposes, by the emissaries of Lord Lorimore; that the man from whose vile attempts he had just rescued her, to whom she was not at all related, had made her proposals of marriage, on the proviso she would enter into all his deceptive schemes; enraged by her decided refusal, he had basely and dishonourably insulted her, and, to his almost miraculous interference, she was indebted for the preservation of her honour.

In

In opposition to these assertions, Engross vehemently persisted in his former avowal that she was his wife, though truly wicked and refractory! He threatened the stranger that if he allowed himself to be imposed on by her fabricated tale, and dared to take her from her natural protector, he would crush him by his power, hurl against him all the legal thunders of the law, for eloping with, and detaining a *femme couverte*.

To these bombastic threats, held out to frighten his young auditor from any further interference, he received no answer but a look of ineffable contempt. Turning to Isabella, who continued, in the tremulous accents of genuine distress, to implore that he would afford her his protection till she could reach a place of safety, he asked if it was her desire to leave Mount Monagan; if such was her intention, and she had confidence to trust in his assurance, he would not leave her till he had restored her to
her

her friends, or placed her in honourable security.

Having gratefully and cheerfully assented to his proposal, he took her hand under his arm, and grasping his fowling-piece, prepared to quit the apartment, without deigning to take any farther notice of Engross; who, maddened to furious rage on seeing all his well-planned schemes about to be defeated, and his victim snatched from him by a mere boy, propelled by desperation, aimed a blow at his head, while he attempted to drag Isabella from his hold; but the agile stranger avoided the well-intended stroke, and having now no terms to keep, with the but-end of his gun levelled his antagonist to the earth; requesting the terrified Isabella to collect her strength and courage, for now was the moment for them to escape! He hurried her out of the room, which he locked after him, and put the key in his pocket. This he did to prevent their being immediately

diately pursued when Engross recovered his senses.

He measured back the way he had entered, without meeting with any opposition till arrived at the gap in the *fosse*; he ascended it with his fair charge in his arms, who finding herself safe on the outside of her prison, cast a fearful glance on its heavy battlements and ponderous grey walls, dreading nothing so much as being forced back within the gloomy mansion;—fear winged her feet, she flew down the hill on which it stood; fleet as Atalanta, she scoured the plain with such rapidity that her youthful pursuer was distanced in the race!

He knew not how properly to dispose of his fair charge; being on a visit to a bachelor, there he could not take her; to place her within the precincts of Mount Monagan would be wrong, for she would soon be traced, and reclaimed by her enemies; to return her to her own connections, without he could attend

attend her, might be fraught with equal danger : from this at present he was precluded by circumstances. What then was to be done ? He saw but one road for him to pursue ; that was full of doubts and intricacies—it might ultimately injure himself ; but it would offer a secure asylum to an isolated young creature, who confiding in his honour, and depending on his promised protection, had committed herself to his care. This retrospection determined him how to act ; his disinterested, generous heart spurned every selfish consideration, and he came to an instant resolution.

Isabella, eager to reach a place of safety, and her young deliverer buried in a profundity of thought, had not exchanged ten words from the time they left Mount Monagan, till the lodge of his friend's seat appeared in view. He now inquired of his companion where her friends resided, and if it was her wish to return to them immediately.

This

This natural question, that brought all the miseries of her deserted and forlorn condition to her view, suffused her eyes with tears, while she answered—

“ London, Sir, contains the only relative I have, but her doors are shut against me ;—she is, alas ! my direst foe ! There was a being, good and worthy like yourself, that would have fostered, cherished, and received me, whom I had once selected as my protector ! I doubt he is now no more—I fear he has been sacrificed by my powerful persecutors, for his attachment to the unfortunate Isabella. I have therefore no prospect but to labour—no wish beyond existing through the efforts of honest industry. From such a peaceful haven I was torn, to have my frail bark dashed against the rocks of ambition.”

Touched by her sorrows, he replied—“ I grieve I cannot at present escort you to the metropolis ; and I am fearful, if you pursue the journey alone, that man, who seems resolved upon
your

your destruction, may regain possession of your person. If, therefore, you will consent to seclude yourself for some time, till the heat of inquiry may be abated, I think I can procure for you a safe and honourable retreat."

Isabella had never, from the first moment of their meeting, suspected the good intentions of the young stranger; for on his open, manly countenance were portrayed the rapid movements of his ingenuous, generous heart; his sparkling eyes melting at the tale of joy or woe, were an index of his philanthropic mind! She viewed him with awful gratitude while he addressed her, thanked him with fervour, and declared herself ready to be guided by his advice.

These preliminaries settled, another difficulty occurred—how, in bad cross-roads, was she to perform a journey of thirty miles without a carriage? He had only horses, and could make no feasible excuse to borrow a conveyance of his friend,

friend, without raising a curiosity, that it would be wrong to gratify.

Isabella now recollected how ill she was equipped as a traveller, indeed how disreputable was her appearance, which must lead to strange conjectures in the breast of those friends, to whom she had been promised by the stranger an introduction. When she was hurried away from Newington Church, with only her bridal clothes, the distress it must occasion had been foreseen; on her arrival at Mount Monagan, she found in her apartment drawers amply supplied with dresses of the most elegant make and delicate texture; enforced by dire necessity, she had selected a few of the plainest to supply the exigencies of the moment, and locking up the rest, had insisted on Mrs. Ap-Gwinneth's keeping the key, to restore it to Lord Lorimore. The cambric robe she had that day worn, was rent in various directions; the turban which confined her luxuriant hair, had fallen off in her

struggles against the insults of Engross, and it now floated in the wind.

Shocked at the indelicacy of her figure; she mentioned to her deliverer this new cause of distress. He felt the full force of her remarks, conscious how much it would make against her with those to whom it was his intention to present her. He knew not how to act in a situation so new, or how to extricate her from such a distressing dilemma. While he pondered on the subject, they arrived at the Porter's Lodge;—a thought instantly occurred, to attempt, by the power of gold, to render the mistress of it useful to his fair charge. This young woman, who had been a servant in the family of his friend, had lately married the gamekeeper; to her he presented Isabella, and told a tale of his having rescued her from ruffians, who were carrying her off; and requested Mrs. Evans would receive her till some conveyance could be procured to restore her to her relatives; if, therefore,

she.

she could furnish her with a change of apparel more fit for a journey, and that would help to disguise her, in case of a pursuit, he would repay her with gratitude.

This request was cheerfully complied with by the simple, good-humoured Mrs. Evans, who believed every thing that was told her; she retired with Isabella, who, being nearly of her own size, was soon dressed in neat and decent habiliments; and having procured a Gipsy straw hat, which she tied on with a muslin handkerchief, and wrapped herself in a Norwich shawl, she returned to the stranger properly equipped to pursue her journey.

He had been too much agitated, by the unexpected adventure in which he was engaged, to pay a due attention to the personal attractions of the heroine; he now viewed, with surprise and pleasure, the elegant symmetry of her form, which the plainest attire could not conceal; he beheld her lovely coun-

tenance, whose *contour* it was impossible to look on without feeling an interest for its fair possessor. Her bright blue eyes beamed upon him with celestial gratitude, precluding the necessity of speech to express formal thanks for the services he had rendered her, or to announce the indelible impression, the benefits he had conferred had made on her susceptible heart.

While ardently gazing on the object of his increasing solicitude, he was in the utmost distress how to find the means of removing her to a place of greater security than a situation, whose proximity to Mount Monagan rendered it untenable! They were above ten miles from a post town, where if he sent his servant, as they kept but one chaise, the chances were it might be engaged. As he enumerated these difficulties to Isabella, Mrs. Evans at once dissipated them, by the welcome information that a hired carriage and four horses had, above an hour since, conveyed some company

pany to her master's, and that they must now be about returning. These joyful tidings were confirmed by its appearance at the end of the avenue. The stranger, desiring their hospitable hostess to detain it, wrote a note, apologizing to his friend for the haste of his departure, promising a speedy return to explain the enigma, committed it to the care of Mrs. Evans, who repeatedly assured him she would faithfully keep the secret he had entrusted to her, even from her *husband*! He made it her interest to be taciturn, by presenting her with a handsome remuneration for having divided her wardrobe with Isabella; telling her, if, on his revisiting the Lodge, he found she had adhered to her word, he would double the *douceur*.

The chaise now drew up to the door, into which Isabella was handed by the handsome stranger, who took his place beside her, and held up a crown-piece as a hint to the postboys to accelerate their locomotive motion;—they, to shew their
powers

powers of comprehension, and their willingness to oblige, applied their smacking whips with such good effect to the lean sides of their jaded hacks, that they flew on with a pace something between both, that could be neither denominated a trot nor a gallop, over purling rills, tangled dells, and cloud-capped mountains !



END OF VOL. III.

—(O)—

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